

## THE AGE OF DISCOVERY

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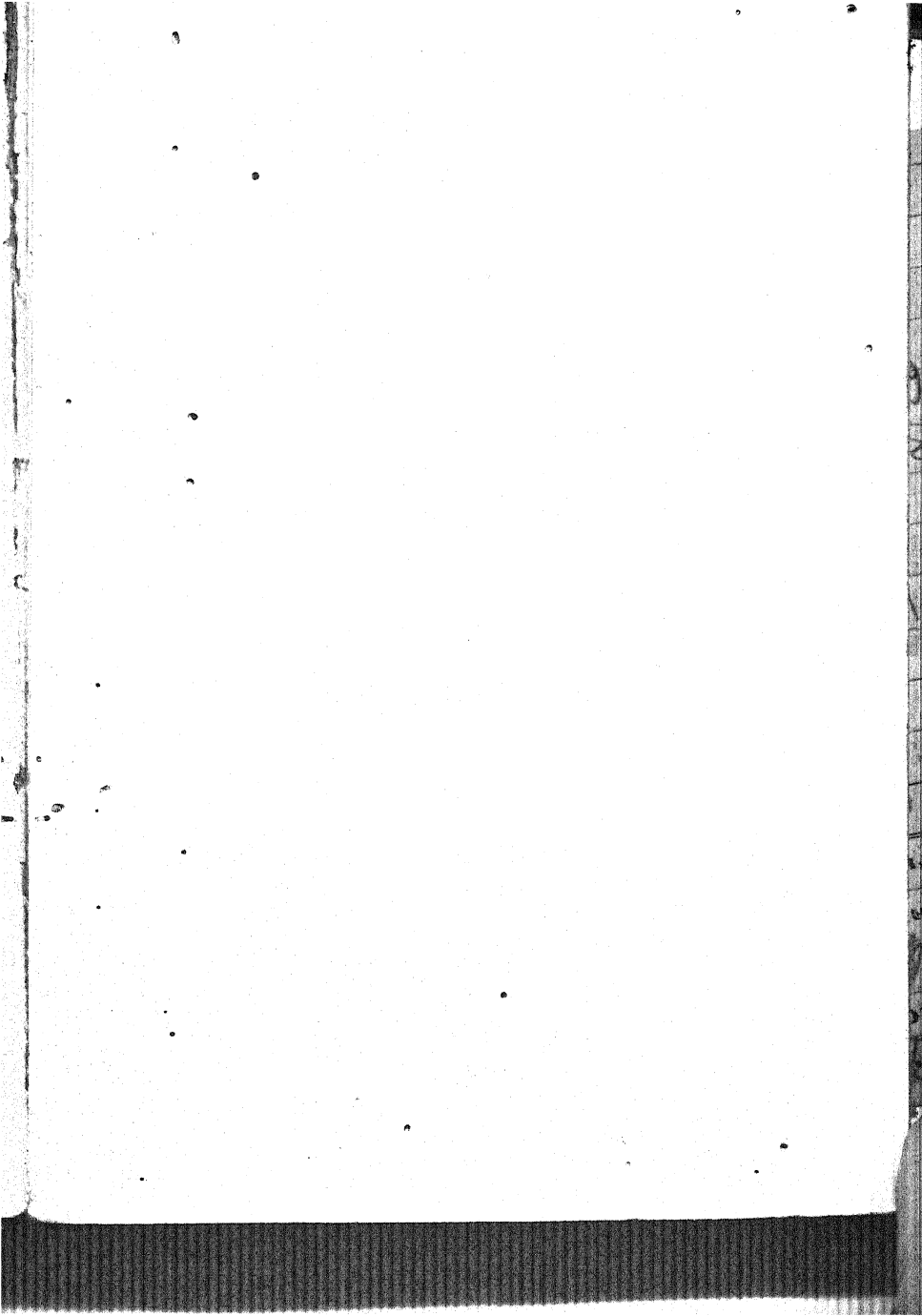
TWENTYMAN

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CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS

# THE AGE OF DISCOVERY .

FROM MARCO POLO TO  
HENRY HUDSON

BY

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# THE AGE OF DISCOVERY

## PART I

### THE DISCOVERY OF THE EAST

#### I

HOW THE POLOS WENT ACROSS CENTRAL ASIA AND  
FOUND THE LANDS OF SILK AND SPICES

**M**ANY years ago in the thirteenth century there lived two brothers, who were jewel-merchants. Their names were Nicolo and Maffeo Polo, and their home was in Venice, a city famous for its trade, and so great that men called it the Queen of the Adriatic.

One day the brothers bade farewell to their families and sailed away to Constantinople in search of merchandise. For many a long year people waited in vain for their return and at last gave them up for lost, thinking they had perished in some storm at sea or of an Eastern fever.

Meanwhile, Nicolo's baby son, Marco, grew to boyhood, longing for adventure and eager to hear any story of those mysterious Eastern countries which sent their silks and spices, jewels and precious stones to the Venetian markets. Marco, like other Europeans of his

time, only knew the East from the stories which Crusaders had handed down from generation to generation. The maps of his day were very strange, for they took Jerusalem as the centre of the earth, and marked such places as the Tower of Babel and the Pillars of Hercules. Marco knew nothing of Eastern Asia and China, and had only heard fantastic tales of India and Central Asia. He had never heard of the Pacific Ocean, nor ever dreamed that by sailing round Africa men could reach India. Like his contemporaries, he did not even know that the world was round. He only knew that far away from Venice there were rich cities, and lands where the sun shone upon pepper trees and ripened figs and spices. He longed to find these countries, and never a day passed without his thinking of them.

Nearly everything which he saw in Venice reminded him of the East. If he leant over the bridges, he could watch the painted gondolas floating along the lagoons, and under their silken canopies he could see the lords and ladies lying upon brocaded cushions and dabbling ringed fingers in the water. The gleaming jewels, the shimmer of the silks in the sun, and the sweet, heavy perfumes would set him dreaming of the East which sent all these luxuries to Venice. If he wandered into the markets and saw the busy housewives buying pepper, cloves, and nutmegs

for their storerooms, he would whisper, "One day I shall find my way to the lands of sunshine and gather spices for myself." Then away he would stroll to the quays to watch the proud Venetian galleys sailing in and out of harbour, some carrying Eastern treasure to Spain, Flanders, and England; others bound for Constantinople and the Black Sea ports, or Alexandria and Syria, whence they fetched the precious cargo which made Venice the most famous market in Europe.

Sometimes a sailor, with a scarf of silk twisted round his head and long gold ear-rings, would stop to speak with the boy, and Marco would ask eager questions, never taking his eyes from the sun-tanned face.

"Whence come you?"

Then the sailor would describe the Mediterranean and all the ports which he had seen, the crowded quays where merchants of many races met and where dark-skinned slaves helped the Venetian sailors to stow away their cargoes.

"What are they like, these Eastern lands, which send us their treasure?" asked the boy.

"Who knows?" the sailor would shrug his shoulders. "Merchants and sailors go no farther than the ports. Across the burning deserts, from these distant countries, men bring the goods on camels and on mules. We buy the merchandise and our galleys carry it away, but

we cannot reach the lands which send us all these riches. The caravan routes are long and dangerous. One is barred by the Turks. The others, men say, pass through the lands of a terrible race called the Tartars, who rule with great savagery, living like heathens upon mare's milk. No Christian could pass that way. Be content, Messer Marco. The treasure is brought to the ports. Venice buys it. Her galleys carry it to Europe. It is enough. What need to go farther?"

But Marco would whisper, "It is not enough," and smiling a good-bye to the sailor would wander away, thinking. The very word "Tartar" filled his head with dreams. He had heard of this wonderful race of Mongols, who had come from Central Asia, like the Turks, and conquering country after country had, between the years 1214 and 1259, built up an empire which stretched from the Yellow River to the banks of the Danube and from the Persian Gulf to Siberia. Marco knew nothing of the lands which they had conquered, but he did know that it was possible for a Christian to visit their empire. Two friars had already done so, one with messages from the Pope and another with letters from the French King, both of whom wanted to make friends with the Tartars. They had written books about their adventures, and Marco, who had heard some of their stories from merchants and monks

in the city of Venice, longed to follow in their footsteps.

One day, in 1269, when Marco was fifteen years old, there was a loud knock on the door of Ca' Polo, where the boy lived with his uncles. A voice cried: "Good day to you all," and two bearded strangers, dusty and travel-stained, came into the room. Marco gazed at them in wonder. Who were they? What did they want? Why were they so strangely dressed? For a moment no one spoke. Then there was a glad cry: "Nicolo! Maffeo! Welcome home!" and amid laughter and congratulations, the strangers were led to places of honour.

The travellers were delighted to be home again, and Nicolo found it difficult to believe that this handsome, well-grown boy was his son Marco. Marco, of course, could scarcely take his eyes off his father, and begged for new stories every minute. When he heard that his father had visited the Tartars, his excitement knew no bounds, and neither Nicolo nor Maffeo had any peace until they had promised to tell all about their adventures.

It was a wonderful story. They had set out for Constantinople where they had laid in a store of jewels, meaning to exchange merchandise at the Mediterranean ports in the usual way, but they had changed their minds and sailed across the Black Sea to the Crimea, where they had a

counting-house. They stayed there for a short time, sorting and polishing their jewels and finally decided to go on a trading expedition to the Tartars. (Here Marco's eyes gleamed, and he became almost impatient when his father paused for breath.)

Travelling eastward, the two merchants reached the Volga, which flows into the Caspian Sea, and they knew that they had come to the land of the Tartars. Now the Tartar empire was so big that it was impossible for one man to govern the whole of it, and so it was divided into four separate kingdoms, called Khanates, each of which was governed by a prince or Khan. When Nicolo and Maffeo had been riding along the banks of the Volga for many days, they came to the Court of one of these Khans, who ruled over a Tartar tribe called the Golden Horde.<sup>7</sup> He received them with great courtesy, and gave them double the value of their jewels and several handsome presents. He treated them with such honour and kindness that they stayed with him for a year.

When the travellers wanted to return to Venice they could not go back by the way along which they had come, for war had broken out between the Khan of the Golden Horde and his neighbours. But Nicolo and Maffeo were as courageous as they were ambitious, and so they decided to go forward instead of back. After many

adventures they reached the beautiful city of Bokhara, one of the richest markets of Asia, a town of silks and brocades, which the boy Marco had seen in his dreams and longed to visit.

For three years the brothers stayed here, learning the Tartar tongue, and then one day some Persian messengers came to Bokhara on their way to visit a powerful ruler who lived far across Asia and was lord of all the Tartars. People called him the Great Khan. All the other Khans owed him allegiance, and he ruled not only over the Tartar tribes of Central Asia, but over the vast population of China, where he lived in the city which we now call Peking.

The messengers were very much astonished to find Europeans in Bokhara, and thought that they would try and persuade Nicolo and Maffeo to accompany them to the court of the Great Khan.

"Gentlemen," said they, "you will gain much honour if you will come with us, for the Great Khan earnestly desires to speak with and see men from Europe. He will treat you with courtesy and kindness. No harm shall come to you."

The two merchants were delighted, and they set out with the envoys and travelled eastward for a year, until they came to the Court of the Great Khan, whose name was Kublaï. They were received very graciously with gifts and feasts, and Kublaï Khan asked them many

questions about the princes of Europe, their wars and their religion. He was much interested in what Maffeo and Nicolo told him of the Pope, and while the brothers were staying at his Court he often sent for them and asked them to tell him more about Rome and the Christian religion.

One day he called them into his presence and said, "My friends, I desire you to return to your own lands as my ambassadors. Make your journey to Rome, and take this letter to the Pope. In it I ask him to send me a hundred men of learning to tell me and my people about the Christian religion. And I charge you, my ambassadors, to return to me by way of Jerusalem, bringing with you some of the holy oil from the lamp which burns over the sepulchre of Jesus Christ."

The brothers knelt before the Great Khan, and touching the ground with their foreheads, promised to carry out his wishes. They received from his hands the letter to the Pope, and a golden tablet on which he had written, in the Tartar language, a command that all his subjects should help the brothers on their journey, and give them anything that they needed.

Then Nicolo and Maffeo made their preparations and set out across Central Asia. Although the golden tablet brought them advantages in every town and village, although they were given escorts and had their expenses paid, the journey



was uncomfortable and difficult. Extreme cold, snow, ice, the flooding of rivers and many other troubles delayed them so that three years passed before they reached Venice.

When the story was finished Nicolo turned to Marco, who had been listening with clasped hands and burning eyes.

"Son," he said, "we have returned to carry our message to the Pope. When we go back to the Court of Kublaï Khan we shall take with us a hundred men of learning and a youth called Marcq Polo."

Marco was almost dumb for joy. He, who had longed to visit the rich silk markets, was now to see them with his own eyes. He, who had listened so eagerly to any story of the Tartars, was going to the Court of the Great Khan. Perhaps he might even reach the islands where the spices grew, or find some new country about which no one had ever heard. Then he would write his adventures in a book, like the two friars who had visited the Tartars. He would show men how to reach these wonderful lands, and very soon other traders would follow in his footsteps instead of travelling no farther than the ports; and many more friars, too, could journey across Central Asia, teaching the Christian religion.

Marco was disappointed when he found that Nicolo and Maffeo did not wish to set out at once.

They needed a rest, and in any case they were obliged to wait because the Pope was dead, and as no one had been appointed in his place they could not deliver the Great Khan's letter. Two years passed, and at last the brothers and young Marco decided to wait no longer, but to return to Kublai Khan and explain that their mission had failed. Fortunately, soon after they had started, a new Pope was appointed, so they turned back and presented him with the Great Khan's letter. But alas, for all their hopes! The Pope did not send a hundred men of learning, but only two friars, who started on the journey very boldly, but were so frightened when they heard rumours of war that they turned back before they had gone very far and left the three Polos to continue alone with the precious phial of holy oil. The travellers first went through Armenia into Mesopotamia, where they stayed for a while at Bagdad. Then, passing slowly through Persia, they halted at many of the important cities before making a difficult journey across the desert of Kerman, where they were in great danger from robbers who lay in wait, hoping to seize what booty they could from the merchants travelling that way.

When the Polos reached the shore of the Persian Gulf they sailed as far as Ormuz, which was at that time one of the most important centres of Indian trade. Here they had hoped to find boats

which would take them by sea to India, but the vessels used by the merchants of Ormuz looked so weak and badly built that they changed their minds, and turning to the north-east passed through Kerman until they came to the city of Balkh. They stayed here for some time to rest, and then continued their journey until they came to a Mohammedan town called Badakshan. Here they remained for a year, and Marco was much interested in the customs of the people, and particularly in the clothes of the women, who did not consider themselves handsome unless they had very large hips, and so wore trousers made of sixty or eighty yards of cotton material gathered in at the waist. Marco, being the son of a jewel merchant, was delighted, too, with the beautiful rubies which were found in the mountains, and in the gold, silver, and copper mines. But little by little his interest began to flag. He was very tired and unused to the changes of temperature, and he soon became so ill with fever that he was carried up to the hills. In the fresh mountain air his health returned, and once again he set out with his father and his uncle.

The three travellers journeyed across Pamir, a high plateau which has been called "the roof of the world." Here Marco was much interested in the wild animals, especially the sheep, which were very fat and had horns three, four, and even six times the length of his hand. Indeed,

these horns were so long that the shepherds used them for making fences and soup-ladles. To-day we call this animal the *ovis Poli*, which means Polo's sheep, because Marco was the first person to describe it.

Day after day the three comrades travelled, passing along the caravan route, where dusky merchants led their heavily-laden camels and pack-mules. Sometimes walking, sometimes riding horses, donkeys, mules, camels, or any beast which they could hire, they reached Kashgar and Yarkand, crossed the sandy deserts of Turkestan and Mongolia, until they came within forty days' journey of the Great Khan's summer palace.

How weary and travel-stained they looked! They had been three and a half years on the way. Marco was no longer a boy but a tall, keen-faced young man. He did not mind hunger and aching limbs, for he had been so much interested in all the wonderful places which he had seen, and he had been able to study the ways of the Tartars and to pick up their language. He had grown to love these wandering people, who lived in the warm plains in the winter and moved to the hills with their herds in the summer. At first he, who was used to a fine Venetian house and comfortable surroundings, found it strange to live in a tent and to drink mare's milk. But he soon grew accustomed to new ways, and he liked these

round tents, made of felt, which were so easily packed on carts and moved from place to place.

Many a time Marco watched the Tartars going to new pastures with their flocks. Little two-wheeled carts covered with black felt carried the women, children, household crockery, and provisions, while the men followed, sometimes wearing their armour of thick dried buffalo hide, and carrying bows and arrows, iron maces, and spears. If the three Polos happened to be going with them, the golden tablet which the Great Khan had given to Nicolo would make them welcome, and the chief of the tribe would entertain them in his own tent.

The entrance of the tent would look towards the South, and inside it, covered with a cloth, there were images of the Tartar god, Nagatay, with his wife and children. No Tartar ever sat down to a meal without offering a morsel of fat to the god, and greasing the mouths of its wife and children. Then, lest some evil spirit might fly away with the food, a spoonful of gravy was poured outside the tent and the Tartar settled down comfortably to feast and to entertain his guest.

One day when the Polos had been travelling slowly through China, they were hailed by a number of Tartars, some dressed in rich cloth of gold lined with ermine, others in soft, bright silk

trimmed with sable. They were followed by soldiers in buffalo hides, and as they all came riding towards the Polos, they shouted a friendly greeting. Nicolo soon recognized them, as envoys of Kublaï Khan, and doubtless he found some old friends.

The rest of the journey was now much easier, for the Great Khan had heard that the Polos were not far off, had sent them this fine <sup>271</sup>escort, and had made preparations for them all along the road. Very soon the travellers came within sight of Shandu, a city where the Great Khan had built a marble palace, surrounded by sixteen miles of park and meadow land. Our own poet, Coleridge, has written about this palace:

“ In Xanadu did Kubla Khan  
A stately pleasure dome decree,  
Where Alph the sacred river ran  
Through caverns measureless to man  
Down to a sunless sea.  
So twice five miles of fertile ground  
With walls and towers were girdled round:  
And here were gardens bright with sinuous rills,  
Where blossomed many an incense-bearing tree,  
And here were forests, ancient as the hills,  
Enfolding sunny spots of greenery.”

In the meadows deer and goats were grazing, white horses wandered in the forests, and huntsmen were riding through the fields, carrying little hunting-panthers on their horses. In the

middle of the grounds stood a grove of trees where Kublaï Khan had built a royal pavilion supported upon gilt pillars. Around these pillars curled the tails of gilded dragons, which bore the roof upon their heads. But it was the palace which filled Marco with amazement. It was made of marble and other coloured stones, beautifully carved, and the halls and smaller rooms were all gilded.

When the Polos were brought into the presence of the Great Khan he was surrounded by his nobles, astrologers, and magicians, all very magnificently clothed. The three merchants knelt before him with their foreheads touching the ground. Overjoyed at the sight of his old friends, Nicolo and Maffeo, the Khan bade them rise and tell him all about their travels and whether they had accomplished their mission.

Nicolo and Maffeo answered his questions, and with many signs of respect gave him the Pope's letter and presents. He commended their diligence, then asked for the oil which they had brought from the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. The brothers presented it to him and he received it with great reverence, ordering his attendants to preserve it with religious care. Meanwhile, his eyes fell upon Marco, who was standing a little apart and watching everything with great gravity.

"Who is this young man?" asked Kublaï.

"He is my son and your servant," answered Nicolo.

And Kublaï replied: "He is welcome, and it pleases me much." Then he ordered his servants to enroll Marco among his attendants of honour. A great feast was held, and everyone in the palace and the city of Shandu rejoiced and made merry.

Now, when the Great Khan feasted there was much pomp and ceremony, and Marco took in every detail with eager eyes. Kublaï himself ate at the upper end of the hall with his face towards the south. Before his throne was a table, and on his left hand sat his wife, while his sons, grandsons, and relations sat upon his right, at tables which were placed on a lower level than the throne. All round the great hall, and in the smaller rooms, sat the nobility and other guests, some at tables and others on rich carpets. In the middle of the hall there was a beautiful square coffer, carved with figures of animals and painted gold. It was hollow and held a vase glittering with precious stones, which was filled with wine. On each of its four sides there were smaller vases, filled with mares' and camels' milk, and all around it there were gilded cups and flagons. Stewards ran hither and thither showing the guests to their places and providing them with wine, meat, and milk, and at



each door stood two gigantic officers with staves in their hands.

The attendants who waited upon Kublai Khan had their noses and mouths covered with embroidered veils, that they might not breathe upon his food. When he called for a drink a page brought it, retired three paces and knelt down, whereupon every one in the hall prostrated himself upon the ground. At the same moment, musical instruments began to play, and continued until the Great Khan had ceased to drink and all the guests had returned once more to their places.

When the meal was finished servants removed the tables. A troupe of actors performed a play, and jugglers and acrobats entertained the guests until it was time for each man to return to his own home.

From that day life became a fascinating and wonderful thing for Marco Polo. Everyone grew to love and respect him. He adopted the customs of the Tartars, learned several of their dialects, and after a while could read and write their language. He hunted, rode, and fished with Kublai Khan, and before very long became Kublai's favourite attendant. The Great Khan found him so intelligent and willing that, after a short time, he sent him on an important mission to a city so far away that the journey took six months. Marco noticed that Kublai was always

delighted to hear about anything new, so he carefully made notes of everything which he saw and heard. The Great Khan was very much pleased when Marco returned with all his information, and he soon made a practice of sending the young man on long journeys so that he could collect details about the manners and customs of the people, what their cities and villages were like, and how great were the distances.

For seventeen years the Polos remained in the service of the Great Khan. During this time Marco travelled far and wide. He wandered over northern and western China, through Yunnan to the outskirts of Tibet. He went by sea on a mission to Cochin China and on to India. For three years he governed the Chinese province of Yangchau in Kublai's name. He passed through the tea and silk regions and saw the wonderful city of Suchan with its six thousand bridges of stone, its priceless wares, and its men of science. He visited Kinsai, a city which he said "stretched like Paradise through the breadth of heaven," and saw its beautiful gardens, luscious fruits, bright fountains, and gay pavilions. He was visiting all those rich cities of the East about which he had dreamed when he was a boy.

It was a wonderful thing to travel in lands which no European knew, but seventeen years is a long time to be away from home, and at last the Polos made up their minds to return to

Venice. They went to Kublai Khan, and kneeling before him, asked leave to depart. To their surprise he seemed both angry and hurt, and for a long time refused to listen. The poor Polos began to feel that they would never see Venice again, when a very fortunate thing happened. Ambassadors came from Persia, seeking a princess as bride for their ruler whose wife had died. Kublai Khan chose them a beautiful girl from his own household, and the envoys set out hoping to return to their master. They travelled for eight months, but were obliged to come back because of the wars which were being waged in many districts.

"Great Khan," said they, "we beseech you to send us and the princess by sea that we may avoid these dangers. The Venetians are skilled seamen and have great knowledge of the world; let them, we pray you, be our guides."

Kublai Khan knew that the Polos had already visited Persia and that Marco had travelled more widely than any of his servants, but he was loath to let the merchants go lest they should not return. After much persuasion, however, he gave his consent, and sorrowfully bade farewell to the three men whom he loved and trusted.

When all preparations were made, the Tartar princess, with an escort of six hundred people, set sail with her Venetian friends. Passing down the coast of China the travellers reached the islands

where the fragrant spices grew. It had always been Marco's desire to visit these islands, and while the ships were lying at anchor, he went ashore and collected many samples of spices and seeds to take back to Venice. In Java he saw aloes and sappan wood, many different spices, benzoin and camphor. In Sumatra he tasted the coconut, saw many samples of Brazil wood and a particularly valuable camphor. Here, too, he saw sago prepared from the pith of a tree, and tasted the cakes and pastry which were made from it. In Ceylon he ate rice in sesame oil, took a sample of the sappan wood which seemed better than that of any other island, and marvelled at the size of the rubies and sapphires and the glint of the topazes and amethysts produced there. He travelled, too, along the Malabar coast of India, and watched the natives fishing for oysters and finding pearls, so round and lustrous that he was amazed.

Sailing along the western coast of India the travellers at last reached Ormuz, after a journey of two and a half years. They went inland to the Persian court, where they were received with great courtesy. In spite of the dangers, which only eighteen people out of the six hundred had survived, Marco, Nicolo, and Maffeo had brought the Tartar princess safely to her destination. The poor little lady wept bitterly when they went away, for she had grown to love them, but

they could not stay. They longed to be home in Venice.

On and on they went, all through Persia, along the caravan route which they knew so well until they came to the coast of the Black Sea. Then they sailed to Constantinople, and without any further adventures reached Venice.

Very strange they looked with their long, straggling beards, coloured turbans, and dusty Tartar coats. Little boys ran after them in the street, dogs barked, and when the weary travellers knocked at the door of Ca' Polo, people poked their heads out of the windows and shouted: "Who are you? Go away!"

After much difficulty they persuaded their relations to open the doors, but at first no one would believe them when they explained who they were. When, at last, people understood that these were the missing merchants, they eagerly flocked to Ca' Polo to hear their story. Then the Polos invited all the members of their family to a banquet. No guest had ever been to such a strange party. At first Nicolo, Maffeo, and Marco appeared in long robes of sumptuous crimson satin. When the guests were seated, the three hosts left the room and reappeared in robes of damask, giving orders that the clothes which they had taken off should be cut up and divided among the servants. A second time they left the room and came back in velvet clothes. Then

once again they retired and appeared in ordinary clothes, carrying the shabby old Tartan garments in which they had arrived.

The guests were amazed at such strange behaviour, but they could scarcely contain their astonishment when Nicolo, Maffeo, and Marco ripped up the seams of the old coats and out of the lining tumbled a cascade of diamonds, emeralds, rubies, sapphires, and other precious stones all glimmering and twinkling in the candle-light.

Of course, everyone in Venice came to hear the Polos' story, and before very long people in other parts of Europe knew all about their adventures, just as we know to-day, for Marco wrote a wonderful volume which became one of the most famous of all books of travel. This is how it happened.

When the Polos returned to Venice in 1295, the city was at war with the people of Genoa, a rival port on the opposite side of Italy. In 1298 Venice was defeated, and Marco Polo, who had been in command of a Venetian vessel, was taken prisoner. While he was in prison he dictated a book describing his adventures and the countries which he had visited. When peace was made between the two cities, he went home. Many people heard of his book, but he described so much that was strange and new that some found it hard to believe him, and they nick-

named him Messer Marco Millionni (Master Mark Millions) because he used the word "millions" so often when talking of the greatness of eastern Asia.

Although people laughed at Marco, wise men knew that he had made many useful discoveries, and that his book gave a new and valuable knowledge of geography. Indeed, it made the world seem bigger, for Marco was the first European to describe the rich and beautiful cities of China and to speak of Burma, Siam, Java, and Ceylon. He was the first person to write of *Cipangu*, which we now call Japan. By his descriptions of the caravan routes along which the traders carried their merchandise, he brought new wealth to Genoa and to Venice, for he taught the merchants how to reach the Far East. So little was known before Marco Polo wrote his book that we may almost say that he discovered Asia.

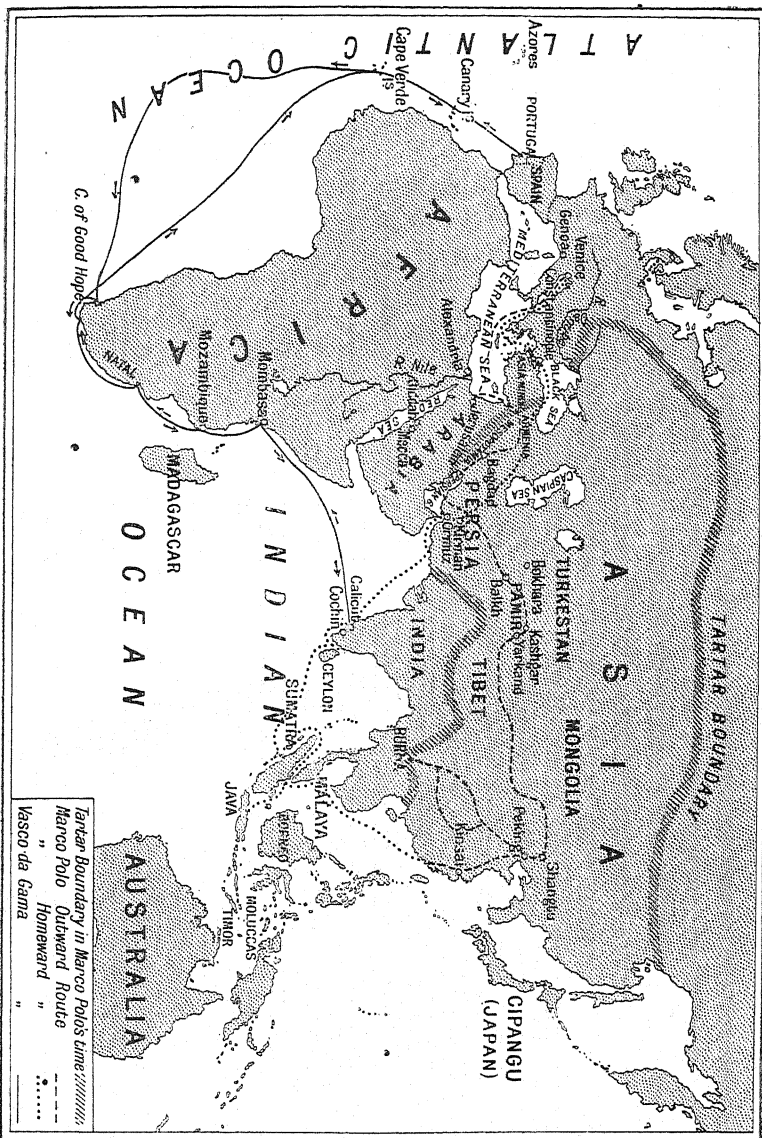
For fifty years after Marco Polo had died Europeans profited by the knowledge which he had given them. In those wonderful days merchants and missionaries travelled along the caravan routes of Central Asia and sailed in junks from China among the spice islands and in the Indian Ocean. Then a great dark curtain seemed to be drawn across the East, and once again Europeans could go no farther than the Mediterranean ports. Wars and revolutions closed the way to the caravan routes. The Chinese drove

the Tartars out of their country, and would not allow any foreigner to enter it. Year after year the Mohammedan Turks drew nearer to Europe, until at last they conquered Constantinople (1453). The glorious East was hidden from Western eyes, and all that Marco Polo had described seemed little more than a legend.

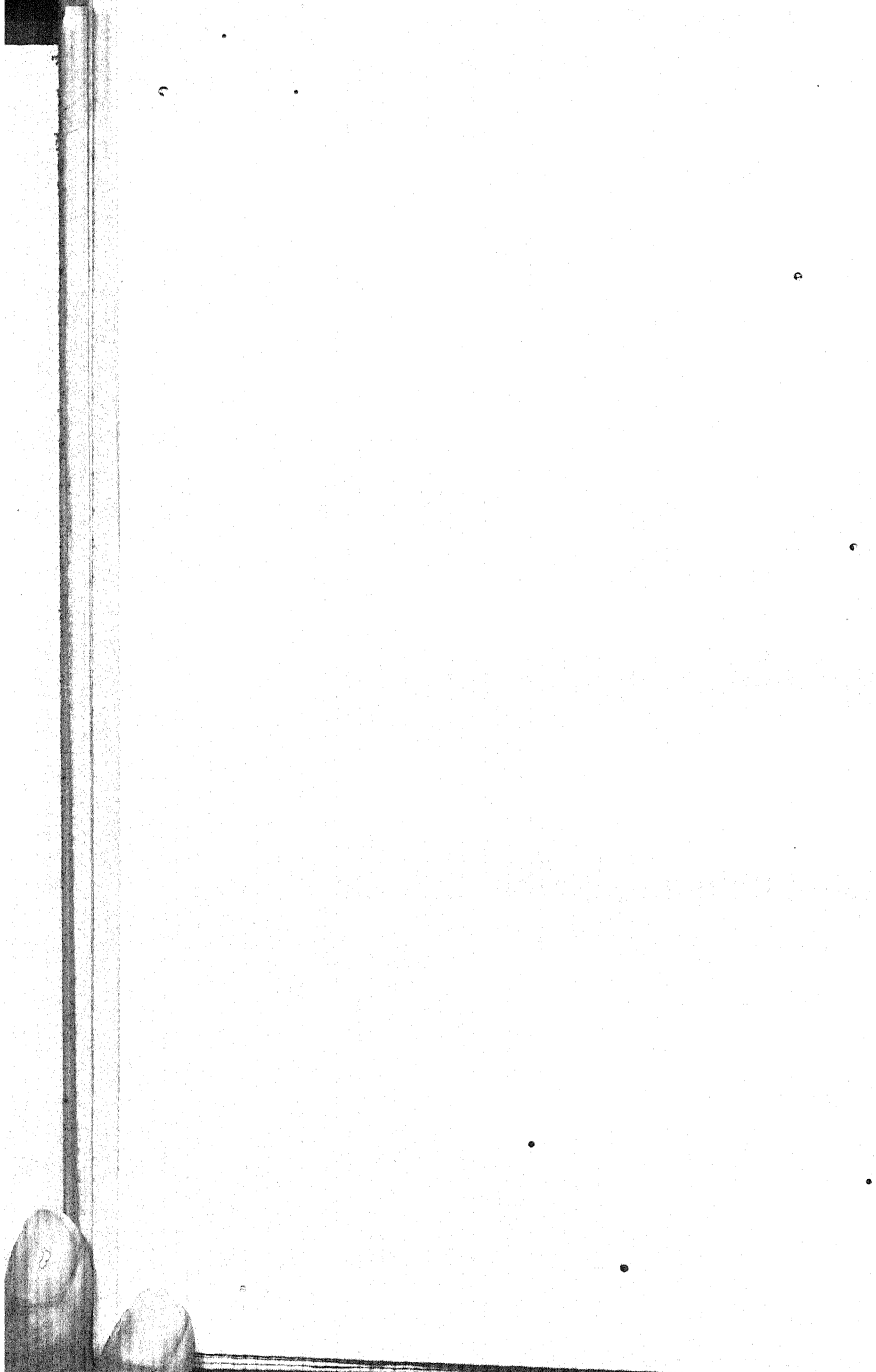
It was now far more difficult for the merchants of Europe to buy the silks and spices which had made them so wealthy. Many of them still read Marco Polo's book, and they began to wonder whether they could not find a new way to those rich lands of sunshine which he had loved so well. There were wise men among them who believed that the world was round and they said to themselves:

"There are more ways than one. If we would reach the lands which Marco Polo knew, we must seek another road, not by land but by sea, not by the east but by the west."





MAP SHOWING THE ROUTES OF MARCO POLO AND VASCO DA GAMA •



## II

### HOW VASCO DA GAMA FOUND A NEW WAY TO INDIA

N EARLY six hundred years ago there lived a Portuguese prince whose name was Henry. He was a great student, and he built himself a house in the south-west corner of his country, overlooking the sea. There he pored over strange old maps and ancient books of geography, studying the winds, the tides, and the stars, and encouraging sailors to come and talk to him. Men of science, mathematicians, and weather-beaten mariners came to see him, and Henry learned what he could from them and told them what he, too, had discovered.

In those days, when men were anxious to find a way to India by sea, Prince Henry was busily making plans. He had always been interested in Africa, and he longed to know what lay beyond that vast continent. No one knew where it ended, and Henry thought that it would be a wonderful thing for Portuguese ships to sail all round Africa and discover what was on the other side. Might they not come to India and those fragrant spice islands which Marco Polo had seen? If so, what honour and wealth would come to Portugal, for her merchants could then sail straight to the rich

Eastern countries and bring back cargoes of pepper and drugs, nutmegs, cloves and spices.

Henry thought deeply about these things, and the more he thought, the more certain he felt that if once a ship could reach the very end of Africa, India would soon be found. He said to himself: "This honour shall be for Portugal."

Then he equipped vessels and trained his sailors in the use of the compass, and choosing trustworthy captains, sent them to explore the coast of Africa. Year after year the ships left Portugal, and because it was Henry who planned these voyages, people called him the Navigator.

For forty years he sent his most expert mariners down this coast. When they returned he made notes of what they had seen and carefully kept the charts which they had made. These Portuguese seamen explored headlands and rivers, found the Cape Verde Islands and the Azores, and in several places formed little colonies, but they did not come to the end of Africa. Again and again they braved the winds and the waves, time after time they came home saying: "We have sailed a little farther but we have not found the end of Africa." But Henry never lost courage, he still said to his men: "Beyond that great country lies the way to India and to the lands where spices grow. Portugal must find it."

So the bold Portuguese sailors continued to

explore the African coast. Long after Henry had died they went on trying until, at last, in 1488, a clever captain, by name Bartholomew Diaz, reached the southern end of the great continent and passed round it to the other side. At the point where the coast turned he found a great cape where he suffered so much from the terrible winds and currents that he called it the Cape of Storms.

When Diaz returned to Portugal with his good news, there were great rejoicings among the people. The King of Portugal was delighted, too; but when Diaz told him the name which he had given to the new cape, the King shook his head: "No, no," he said, "if we call it the Cape of Storms, our sailors will be afraid to pass by it. We will call it the Cape of Good Hope. For now we may hope that our ships will soon reach India."

Nearly ten years passed before another voyage of discovery was made, and then one warm July morning in 1497 the people of Lisbon made their city gay with flags. The streets which led from the cathedral to the river were lined with cheering crowds. Men waved their hats and women threw flowers from their windows as a long procession of men passed by. First came a richly dressed standard-bearer, carrying a silk banner with a golden cross upon it. Then came a dark bearded man on horseback. The people knew

him for they had often seen him riding through the gates of the palace on his way to speak with the King.

"Hail! Vasco da Gama," they cried. "May Our Lady guide you to the Indies. Brava. Brava."

They cheered and cheered again as he rode by with his brother behind him, and they waved to all the sailors who marched past in their liveries, followed by the gentlemen of the King's Court.

When the procession reached the banks of the river Tagus, Vasco da Gama, his captains, and his crews were rowed in gaily painted boats to the four new ships which lay at anchor. They embarked, fired a salute to acknowledge the cheers, and, passing down the river, anchored once again before a little chapel which stood upon a hill near a monastery. It was the chapel of Our Lady of Belem (Bethlehem) which had been built by Prince Henry the Navigator for his mariners.

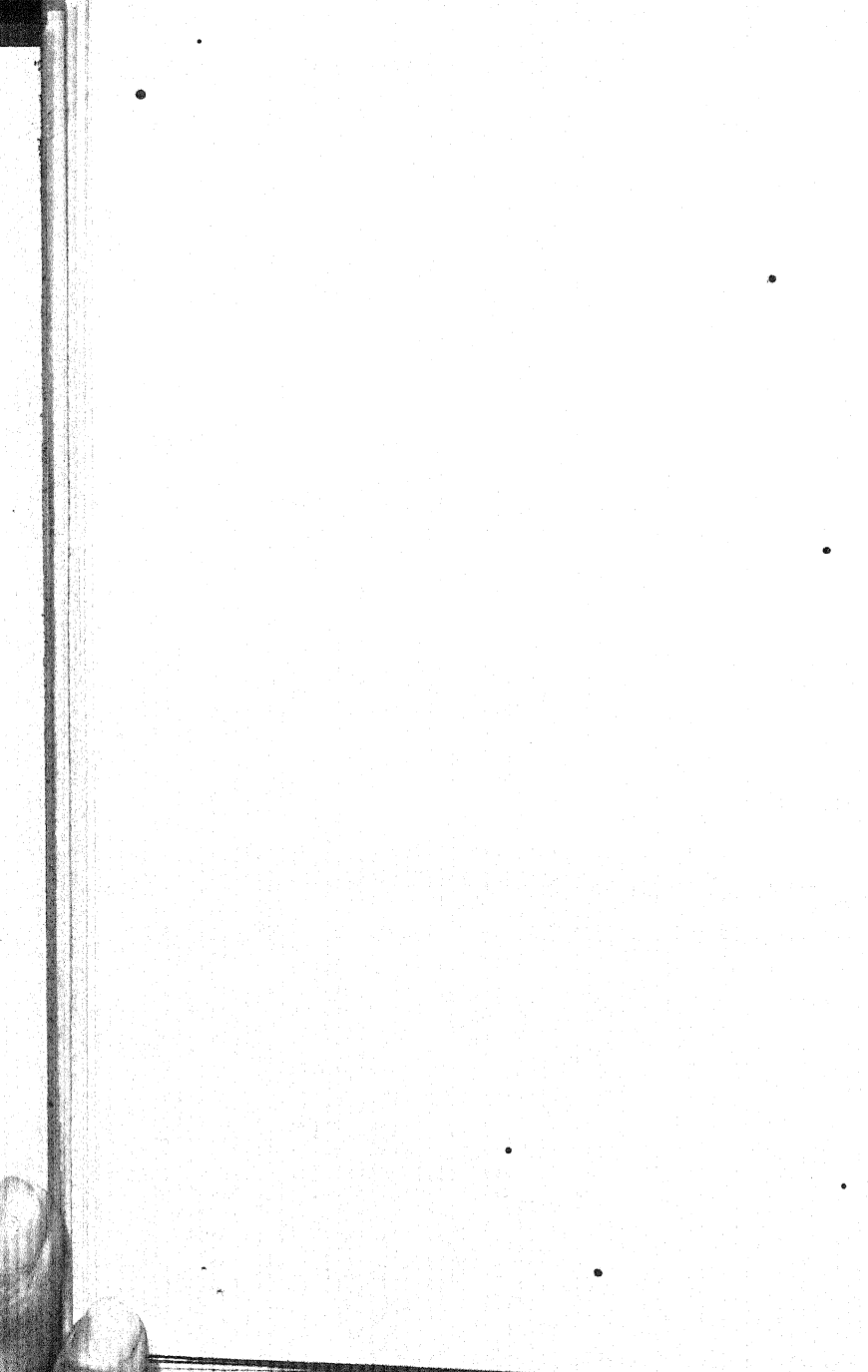
As the wind was against them, Vasco da Gama and his officers went up to the monastery, where they remained for three days. Here the monks, by order of the King, wrote down the names of all who were taking part in the expedition, their native towns, and the names of the wives and parents to whom money was to be given if husbands or sons were lost.

On the night of July 7th the wind dropped. Vasco da Gama and his officers knelt in prayer



VASCO DA GAMA

*(By permission of the Royal Geographical Society)*





until the morning. When they came out of the chapel they found a great crowd of people standing on the hill by the monastery and all round the mud flats which lined the estuary of the river. Then Vasco and Paulo da Gama, Nicolas Coelho, another captain, the pilots, and Bartholomew Diaz, who was bound for Africa, left the chapel. Each carried a lighted taper and walked slowly with bowed head. Behind them followed the priests and friars, chanting the litany. As they passed, the bare-headed crowd knelt on the ground, uttering the responses. At the landing-place the procession halted. A priest read the general confession and granted absolution to all who might perish in the adventure.

"Amen, amen," sang the kneeling crowd, then rose and watched the seamen row towards the boats.

The royal standard was hoisted to the main top of Vasco da Gama's ship, the *Sao Gabriel*, his scarlet pennon fluttered from the crow's nest. The sailors weighed anchor, the guns boomed, and wind filled the white sails on which great red crosses were painted. The little flotilla of rowing boats sheered off and the four adventurous ships sailed slowly down the river.

As they passed out of sight the people who thronged the banks of the Tagus burst into tears, stretching out their arms, and imploring the mariners to come back and to give up such a rash

and useless voyage. There were cries of "Husband," "Father," "Son," mingled with prayers and wailing. These were the last sounds of Portugal which the mariners heard as they sailed into the open sea.

But in his cabin Vasco da Gama was thinking of the great adventure and poring over the logs and charts which Diaz had made nine years earlier. He had among his most useful possessions three books; a strange old geography by Ptolemy, the book of Marco Polo which filled him with a great longing to find India and the Spice Islands, and a bound volume containing copies of the reports of two Portuguese explorers who had managed to struggle overland to Asia. He had also tables, supplied to him by the astronomer royal, showing the declination of the sun, ancient maps, mariners' compasses, which in those days were called Genoese needles because the Genoese sailors were the first Europeans to use them, and a strange, wooden instrument called an astrolabe, which helped him to measure the height of the sun.

The ships went gaily on until they came to the Cape Verde Islands, where Diaz bade them farewell. Then, instead of hugging the shore of Africa, they sailed out into the ocean. Days, weeks, and months passed and they still sailed on, first to the south and then to the east, until they came once more in sight of the African coast, not

far from the Cape of Good Hope. Here Vasco da Gama ordered some of his men to land and search for fresh water. In a sandy waste these sailors saw a man with woolly black hair and yellowish-brown skin, gathering wild honey. They crept up to him stealthily through brushwood, then leaped out suddenly and seized him. The poor Hottentot trembled with fright as they hustled him into the boat and forced him to embark on the *Sao Gabriel*. Vasco da Gama was determined to make friends with him because he wanted water and fresh meat, so he had a little feast spread in one of the cabins and made the ship's boys feed the Hottentot. The boys sat beside the poor prisoner, giving him tit-bits, and after a time he lost his fear and became quite friendly. Next morning Vasco da Gama gave him some little bells and dressed him in a cloak and a scarlet cap and sent him ashore. After this a number of natives came down to the beach. One of the sailors made friends with them, and went to see their village. He was away for some time, and when he came back a boat was sent to receive him. Just as he was getting into it, the Hottentots began to shout angrily and, leaping up and down, flung stones and spears at the Portuguese. The captain-major, for such was Vasco's title, and two others were wounded, and as they were unarmed they rowed hastily to the ships, and after a few days sailed away.

They were now very near to the cape, but could not sail round it for some days as the currents were so strong and the winds were against them. When, at last, they succeeded, such a terrible storm sprang up that the sailors begged their officers to take them home to Portugal.

"If we may not go back, we will not go forward," they cried. "Put us ashore that we may die on land."

As the storm grew angrier and the waves rose, they whispered among themselves and planned to rise against their captains, overpower them, and return to Portugal. The pilot and master of one of the ships aided and abetted them, and if Vasco da Gama had not heard of the threatened mutiny and put the ringleaders in irons, he would have had a very difficult time.

The storm lasted for several days, and when at last the winds fell, and the sea grew calm, the ships put into shore for they were leaking badly. The crews, once again content now that the sky was blue and the waters unruffled, set to work to careen and caulk the ships. Some cleaned the planks from the growth of seaweed which clung to them, scraping away the carbuncles and shellfish, others poured boiling pitch over the fresh oakum, and others looked after the sails and tackle, probably working hard in order to forget the fears which had prompted them to rebel against their captains.

When all was ready they sailed to the north, keeping close to the coast, where they landed at intervals and explored rivers and bays. Sometimes they set up a pillar with a cross upon it to show that the Portuguese had visited that spot, but very often, after they had gone, the native villagers pulled these erections down, fearing that "the white man's magic" would do them some harm.

As they were visiting places which they had never seen before, Vasco da Gama gave names to the different bays and capes, sometimes using those which the natives told him and sometimes inventing new ones. For instance, he called the country past which he was sailing on Christmas Day "Natal," which means birth, because he reached it on the birthday of Jesus. Natal is now a province of the British Dominion (or Union) of South Africa.

While Vasco da Gama was marking his charts, one of his companions was busily keeping a diary in which he described, with great care, all the places at which the ships called, and the strange customs of the natives. This diary is still in existence, and has been translated into English. Here are some of the interesting things which this Portuguese adventurer has to say:<sup>1</sup>

"On Saturday [December 2] about two hun-

<sup>1</sup> This and the following extracts from the diary are taken from the *Roteiro* quoted in *A Journal of the First*

dred negroes came, both young and old. They brought with them about a dozen oxen and cows and four or five sheep. As soon as we saw them we went ashore. They forthwith began to play on four or five flutes, some producing high notes and others low ones, thus making a pretty harmony for negroes who are not supposed to be musicians: and they danced in the style of negroes. The captain-major then ordered the trumpets to be sounded, and we in the boats danced, and the captain-major did so likewise when he rejoined us. This festivity ended, we landed where we had landed before and bought a black ox for three bracelets. This ox we dined off on Sunday. We found him very fat and his meat as toothsome as the beef of Portugal. . . .”

“January 11th, 1498. On the following day we went close in shore in our boats and saw a crowd of negroes, both men and women. They were tall people and a chief was among them. The captain-major ordered Martin Affonso, who had been a long time in Manicongo, and another man, to land. They were received hospitably. The captain-major in consequence sent the chief a jacket, a pair of red pantaloons, a Moorish cap, and a bracelet. The chief said that we were welcome to anything in his country of which we stood in need. . . . That night Martin Affonso

*Voyage of Vasco da Gama*, 1497-9, ed. E. G. Ravenstein.  
Hakluyt Society, No. 99.

and his companion accompanied the chief to his village. . . . On the road the chief donned the garments which had been presented to him, and to those who came forth to meet him he said with much apparent satisfaction: 'Look what has been given me!' The people upon this clapped hands as a sign of courtesy, and this they did three or four times until he arrived at the village. Having paraded the whole of the place, thus dressed up, the chief retired to his house and ordered his two guests to be lodged in a compound where they were given porridge of millet, which abounds in this country, and a fowl just like those of Portugal. . . . The houses are built of straw. The arms of the people include bows and arrows and spears with iron blades. Copper seems to be plentiful, and the people wore ornaments of it on their legs and arms and in their twisted hair. Tin, likewise, is to be found in the country, for it is to be seen on the hilts of their daggers, the sheaths of which are made of ivory. Linen cloth is highly prized by the people who are always willing to give large quantities of copper in exchange for shirts. . . ."

As Vasco da Gama sailed along the east coast he saw that the people were different from those who lived near the Cape of Good Hope. They were tall, their skin was almost black, and they wore very little clothing. Some had copper bracelets on their arms and ankles, and others

had little rings of tin thrust through their lips. Farther north, at a place called Mozambique, the people were again different. Their skin was fairer and they seemed to have heard about other parts of the world. They wore head-dresses of silk embroidered in gold, and their clothes were of fine linen or cotton decorated with coloured stripes. At first they greeted Vasco da Gama in a friendly way, but afterwards they turned against him. "This stranger," they said, "has come from the west to try and steal our trade. He will do us harm."

Now these people were called Moors or Arabs. In those days most of the trade of the lands in the Indian Ocean was carried on by Arab merchants, who not only traded in their own countries of Arabia and East Africa, but sent their wares overland to the Mediterranean ports, where Western merchants bought them as we read in the story of Marco Polo. When the Arabs of Mozambique heard that Europeans had come by sea to their country, they were very angry, for they feared that the Portuguese would take away much of their profit.

Vasco da Gama himself was delighted to see Arab boats in the harbour. He noticed that they were laden with gold, silver, cloves, pepper, ginger, and quantities of pearls and rubies, and he knew that he must be near the rich Spice Islands and the long-sought land of India. He, there-



fore, hired two Arabs to guide him farther up the coast of Africa, but when he wanted to start, he found that one of the pilots was missing, and he was obliged to send two boats filled with men to fetch him. But the natives would not allow the boats to approach the shore. They launched their own craft and threatened the Portuguese with bows and arrows, and Vasco da Gama angrily fired upon the town.

That evening the man who kept the diary wrote in his cabin: "When it grew dusk we lowered out boats. At midnight the captain-major, accompanied by some of us, started in search of water. We took with us the Moorish pilot, whose object appeared to be to make his escape rather than to guide us to a watering place. . . . In the evening we returned to the mainland guided by the same pilot. On approaching the watering place we saw about twenty men on the beach. They were armed . . . and forbade our approach. The captain-major upon this ordered three bombards to be fired upon them so that we might land. . . . On Sunday morning a Moor came abreast of our ships and told us that if we wanted water we might go in search of it, giving us to understand that we should meet with something which would make us turn back. The captain-major no sooner heard this than he resolved to go. . . . Our bombards soon made it hot for them. . . ."

With no weapons but spears, bows, and slings, the Arabs had little chance of escape, and after taking a few prisoners and rifling some of the boats, Vasco da Gama sailed away until he came to a small place called Mombasa. The King seemed to be very friendly, and in exchange for a string of coral beads sent Vasco da Gama some samples of cloves and pepper, a sheep, some sugar-cane, and numbers of oranges and lemons. But the captain-major thought that this King and his people were only pretending to be kind. He saw them whispering to the captive Arab pilots and he began to distrust them. That evening he sent for the pilots and gave orders that they should be questioned. In those days "questioning" a prisoner often meant putting him to torture. Before very long the poor Arabs, screaming with pain as boiling oil was poured upon their naked bodies, confessed that the King of Mombasa was plotting against the Portuguese and meant to capture the ships. When they were tortured again they threw themselves into the sea although their hands were tied.

The Portuguese then left Mombasa and went to another little town where the King was delighted to see them and came out to meet them in his boat. When he had left he sent his son as a hostage to Vasco da Gama and invited two of the Portuguese to come to see his palace. They found him seated on a bronze chair under a crimson satin umbrella. He was dressed in damask

trimmed with green satin. An old man carrying a short sword in a silver sheath acted as his page, and behind him stood his musicians. He was so friendly and helpful that the captain-major trusted him, and released all the Arabs whom he had captured at Mozambique, telling the King that this was a sign of friendship. The King was so much pleased that he sent Arab pilots to guide the Portuguese ships to India, and Vasco da Gama set sail full of hope.

This time the ships left the coast and went eastwards into the open sea. For three weeks they saw no land and, if they had not been reassured by the Arabs, they might have turned back in despair and never found the country which they had been seeking for so long.

At last, in the month of May, they sighted, ahead of them, a faint blue line like a cloud. As they drew near they saw that it was land, and very soon they could distinguish the round domes and tapering minarets of a big city. Nearer and nearer they came until they could see the people on the shore. The skin of these people was light brown, and they were naked to the waist, round which they wore cotton clothes which hung to their knees or ankles. The men had ear-rings and the women wore bracelets. As the ships drew near, they all came running down to the edge of the water, chattering with excitement.

The Portuguese sailors ran up and down about

their tasks, calling to one another: "It is India. Surely it is India." And Vasco da Gama shaded his eyes and looked across the thin strip of water which separated him from the coast and knew that he had found the land which he sought. He was a proud man that day, for he, the leader of the Portuguese ships, had found a way to India by sea. If the Portuguese could keep this secret all the wealth of the Indian ocean, the precious stones and the fragrant spices would be theirs.

But he had little time for day-dreams. He knew that he must land in this city of Calicut and obtain an audience with its King, so he sent ashore one of his men with the Arab pilot, to say that he had come all the way from the greatest Christian King in the world with a message of friendship, and to ask that he might take on board a cargo of pepper and drugs in return for rich merchandise. When the King heard this message he was very much pleased. He sent figs, fowls, and coconuts to the ships, and promised to give Vasco da Gama and his captains an audience.

So the captain-major and twelve of his men landed at Calicut and made their way towards the palace. Before they had gone very far they saw a Hindu temple which some of them took for a Christian church. All round the walls there were painted figures, some wearing crowns, others with teeth protruding several inches from

their mouths and some with four or five arms. The Portuguese thought "What strange saints are these?" And when Vasco da Gama knelt down to pray, one of his men whispered, as he crossed himself, "If these be devils, I worship the true God."

Very soon a palanquin was brought. The captain-major, who was dressed in his finest clothes, seated himself inside it and was carried by four Indians, his twelve companions walking behind. As they went along, the little procession was followed by crowds of people. Women held up their babies to look at the Portuguese, who were so jostled by the crowd at the palace that they had to fight their way through the gates. They found the King in a little courtyard, lying under a gilt canopy, upon a green velvet couch, which was covered with fine white cotton. He was chewing betel-nuts which he took from an enormous golden bowl on his right, while in his left hand he held a goblet into which he spat the juice. He was a fat, dark man, naked to the waist, but he wore such gorgeous jewels round his neck and arms that he seemed to sparkle from head to foot. The Portuguese had put on their best clothes, but they looked quite shabby beside these glittering stones.

Vasco da Gama greeted the monarch, holding his hands above his head as he had seen the Indians salute. The King smiled and beckoned

him to come nearer, then sent for a stone bench for the other Portuguese and ordered bananas and water to be prepared for them. Whenever the gentlemen of the Court spoke to the King, they stood before him with bent heads and held their hands before their mouths. One of them wanted to deliver Vasco da Gama's message, but the captain-major answered that this was impossible as he bore greetings from one King to another. When the King heard this, he went into another room and Vasco da Gama followed. With the help of an interpreter he told the King of Calicut that the King of Portugal desired peace and friendship, and that if the people of India would give the white men spices to carry away by sea, they would grow rich, for the Portuguese were men of wealth, who could bring them many things which they had never seen before.

The audience lasted far into the night, and when the tired men set out to find the lodgings which had been prepared for them, the rain poured down in torrents and they arrived at their quarters weary and drenched.

The next day Vasco da Gama intended to give the King of Calicut some presents. He had chosen for him some jugs and basins, two casks of oil and two of honey, some Portuguese hats, twelve pieces of cloth, four strings of coral, four scarlet hoods, and a number of knives. But the

Arab merchants who were living in Calicut laughed at these gifts, saying: "These men are no true ambassadors. What King would send such mean presents? The poorest trader could find something better." When the King's messengers came for the gifts, they, too, laughed scornfully and refused to take them to the palace.

After this difficulty life became very hard for the Portuguese. At the next audience the King kept Vasco da Gama waiting for several hours, and when he finally received him, was very unfriendly until he was given the letters which the King of Portugal had sent. Even then he only gave a grudging permission for the Portuguese to bring their wares ashore and sell them.

It was all very unpleasant. Vasco had much difficulty in buying the spices which he wanted to take home as the people of Calicut laughed at the Portuguese goods and would only give low prices for them. All the time the Arab traders were working against the Portuguese, whispering to the people: "Do not trust these evil men. They do not come from a rich king. They are robbers." The people listened and at one time shut the captain-major and his men in one of the houses and kept them as prisoners.

When he was at last allowed to return to his ships, Vasco decided that it was time for him to leave India, and so he sent a messenger to the King; but the Arab merchants had been busy.



They thought: "If he goes back to the west he will come again and steal our trade," so they tried to poison the King's mind, saying, "See, the miserable gifts which they brought. O King, these are no envoys from a wealthy monarch. They are but pirates, serving their own ends." Then the King captured Vasco's messenger and refused to allow him to return to the ship. The captain-major waited for some time but he soon guessed what had happened, and he seized some Indians, who had embarked on the *Sao Gabriel* to see what a Portuguese ship was like, and he said, "If my own man does not return I shall carry these Indians away to Portugal." Very soon a little boat brought back his messenger and a letter from the King of Calicut to the King of Portugal. This letter was written with an iron pen upon a palm leaf, and it said that as Calicut was rich in cinnamon, cloves, ginger, pepper, and jewels, the traders would exchange these things for gold, silver, corals, and scarlet cloth.

Vasco now set free most of his prisoners, but he still kept a few because some of the Portuguese goods had been stolen. When he had made his preparations he set sail, and doubtless the Arab traders were glad to be rid of him. Unfortunately, before he had gone very far, the ships were becalmed.

"Ha," cried the Indians, "the white-faced



foreigner cannot go. The wind is fighting for the Indian." They seized their weapons and dragging, pushing, and heaving, launched seventy boats. Spears and stones whirled through the air, and the water was black with Indian barques darting hither and thither. Luckily for the Portuguese the wind rose suddenly and a storm carried their ships out to sea so that they had, perforce, to begin their homeward journey.

For a whole year they sailed, but now they ceased to mind dangers and difficulties. They were going back to Lisbon, and in their holds they carried a cargo of spices; spices which had not been sent a long, long way overland to the Mediterranean for Venetian merchants to sell in Europe, spices which had been brought direct from India. Great was the wealth in store for Portuguese traders and great the glory for Portuguese sailors, who had found the way to India by sea.

When Vasco da Gama arrived on the Portuguese coast with flags flying and pennons fluttering, numbers of little boats came to meet him. The pilot guided him into harbour while the King watched from a window. On the beach all the nobles of the Court were gathered, and the captain-major was received by a bishop and one of the chief gentlemen of the palace. When he went into the presence of the King, Vasco da Gama knelt to kiss his hand, but the

King rose from his chair to honour the man who had discovered the new road to India.

Vasco was rewarded with titles and money, for he had brought great glory to his country. For many years afterwards the Portuguese traded with Africa and India. They formed colonies, built houses for their merchandise, and captured unfriendly towns, very often leaving a terrible trail of blood and ashes behind them. To-day they are still masters of some of the places which they conquered so long ago—Angola, Mozambique, and Goa. Spanish, Dutch, and English followed in their footsteps, and although in later years their glory was marred by many cruel deeds, we honour them as brave sailors, pioneers who never ceased trying until they had found the country which they had sought for so long.

## PART II

# THE DISCOVERY OF THE WEST

### I

#### HOW THE NORSEMEN COLONIZED GREENLAND AND FOUND WINELAND THE GOOD

**E**RIC the Red lived in Iceland. He was strong of arm and fleet of foot, and no other Norseman knew so well as he how to choose the best timber for a ship, nor how to find land which would yield most profit. But he was high-handed and quick-tempered, and if ever there was a quarrel in Iceland, Eric was sure to be fighting either on one side or the other.

Eric's settlement was in the north of the island. He had thralls to work his farm and slaves to land his cargo when he came home from a voyage, and wait upon him in the house, but he wanted more property, for although he was a sea-rover he was a land-lover, too, and a good farm gave him almost as much pleasure as a beautiful ship. He had three sons, a lad called Lief, two small boys, Thorwald and Thorstein, and a daughter Freydis, who was as brave as she was crafty. The boys would grow up and want land of their own and the girl would marry and

need a dowry, so Eric moved from the north and went to the south, where he hoped to build a house meet for a Viking chief. It was to take the usual form of a long hall with space enough for benches and a table on either side and fires down the middle. On each side of this hall there were to be aisles out of which the bed-chambers and women's apartments would open. Eric and the children looked forward to seeing it finished, but trouble overtook them because of Red Eric's high-hand and quick temper.

It happened that a good piece of land lay above the house of Valthjof, a neighbouring chief, but it had to be levelled, and Eric's slaves worked upon it so that the ground was loosened and a landslide buried Valthjof's house. Erjulf, one of Valthjof's cousins, slew the slaves for their carelessness, and because of this insult Eric the Red flew into a rage and killed Erjulf. He was brought up for judgment and sentenced to a term of banishment, so the beautiful house was never built. But the beams, which were to have supported the roof, were still Eric's property, and to a Norseman house-beams were precious and were often thought sacred, for figures of the gods were carved or painted upon them. As he was under sentence of banishment, Eric became a wanderer, and left the sacred wooden beams with his friend, Thorgest.

The years passed and the red-haired chief

went sea-roving, and at last came back to Iceland and made up his mind to settle there again. He sent to his friend and asked for the beams, but they were never returned. So Eric quarrelled with Thorgest and Iceland was the scene of many battles, for the two chiefs gathered followers from the countryside, and there was little peace for anyone. Matters came to such a pass that Eric was outlawed, and while his enemies sought for him among the islands off the coast, he made ready his ship and sailed away by stealth. His friends escorted him out of sight, and as Thorgest's men were afraid of attacking so many vessels, Eric the Red escaped into the wide seas.

He hoisted his square striped sail and turned the nose of his dragon towards the west. His ship looked like some strange sea-monster with a golden head, coloured wings, and a black body covered with bright scales, for the Norsemen hung their shields on either side of it. As Eric stood at the helm and looked across the blue dancing water, he said: "Once Gunnbjörn, son of Wolf the Crow, was driven by a storm to the west of Iceland, and he saw, far away, a strange land. That is the land which I seek."

Eric sailed on and on until he came at last to a coast which he had never seen before. He cruised among the little bays, moving southward and landing every now and then to see if the country was habitable. Glaciers stretched clear

and blue above him, but Eric was a Norseman and so he had no fear of snow and ice. When he found that no one owned this land he spent three winters there, exploring and building himself a settlement, and when the weather was good he sailed back to Iceland, hoping to give the news of his discovery to those who had befriended him in his trouble.

He reached Iceland in the autumn and wintered with a friend until Thorgest's men heard of his whereabouts and beat him and his followers in a terrible battle. Then Eric decided that Iceland was no place for him and his family, and he persuaded his friends to make ready their ships and help him to colonize the new country. He called the land which he had discovered *Greenland*. "Because," he said, "if it has a good name men will be attracted thither."

Eric soon became the chief man in Greenland, where he built himself a beautiful house and had the finest settlement in the land. The friends, who followed him, lived in little groups along the coast and they gave many of the fiords their own names.

Among these people, was a certain Herjulf of Herjulfsvið, who had a fine young son called Bjarni. Now, Bjarni was a bold sea-rover who had been on many a foreign voyage and had a trading ship of his own. He used to spend alternate winters abroad and with his parents in

Iceland. He happened to be away when Herjulf followed Eric the Red to Greenland, and when he arrived at his father's fiord and found the deserted homestead he was bitterly disappointed.

"Do not discharge my cargo," he said, "before I find my father, for I must spend this winter with him according to my custom."

He went among his friends asking for news, and they told him how Eric the Red had persuaded many a Viking to sail away to a new country, which had the pleasant name of Greenland. Bjarni listened and was pleased.

"I will take my ship and her cargo to Greenland," he cried. "Who will go with me?"

His own men answered "I," "and I," "and I," until all who loved and trusted him had agreed to accompany him, although they knew that he had never before sailed in Greenland waters.

They put to sea, as eager as children to find something new, and they sailed on happily for three days, bearing to the west. But very soon the fair winds ceased and the northern fogs and mists bore down upon them, so that they could not tell where they were going. These Norsemen of the tenth century had no compasses and nautical instruments. The sun and the stars were their only guides. In the thick fogs and the grey sea mists they lost their bearings and drifted with the tide. For several days they made no

progress, and it was only when the fog lifted and they could see the sun that they knew in what direction they should steer. So they hoisted their sails and the wind carried them farther west. After three days one of them sighted land, and as they sped towards it someone asked: "Is this Greenland?"

But Bjarni shook his head. "I think not," he said, "let us sail as near as we can and see what it is like."

For several miles they hugged the coast, but as the land was mountainous, well wooded, and covered with small knolls, they knew that it was not Greenland and turned away, sailing farther north. Some of them wanted to land and see the woods, but Bjarni, ever ready for a raid or a trading venture, was no explorer, and he gave the order to hoist the sail. By and by a gentle wind carried them to what they thought was another land. It was flat and covered with forests.

"Sail on!" cried Bjarni. "This is not Greenland, where men tell me there are great glaciers."

But again the men wanted to land. "This is a fair place," they said. "Let us put in here for we are short both of wood and water."

"You are in need of neither," cried Bjarni, and, when the crew began to abuse him, ordered the sail to be unfurled and the bows to be turned away from the land.



## *THE DISCOVERY OF THE WEST* 61

The angry men obeyed reluctantly, and a south-westerly wind bore the ship away from the coast for three days. On the third day they came to a high, mountainous land with ice upon it.

"Shall we put in here?" asked the men, but Bjarni told them to sail on for the land seemed to him good for nothing. Still grumbling, they held their course until they were carried by a wind out to sea, and after four days they sighted another land.

"Have we reached Greenland, Bjarni Herjulfsson?" asked the men, once again.

"We will put in here," said Bjarni, "for it is like what I have heard of Greenland. Make for yonder point!"

The men steered towards a cape where a small boat was anchored, and close to the shore they saw a wooden house. They had come to Herjulfssfiord, and when Bjarni had rowed to land and walked up the beach to the homestead, he was greeted by his own father. Everyone was glad to see him, but there were many who thought that he was "lacking in curiosity" because he could report nothing of the new lands which he had found.

Among the latter was Lief, son of Eric the Red, who was growing into a handsome, adventurous lad. He thought of these lands which Bjarni had seen, and longed to find them for

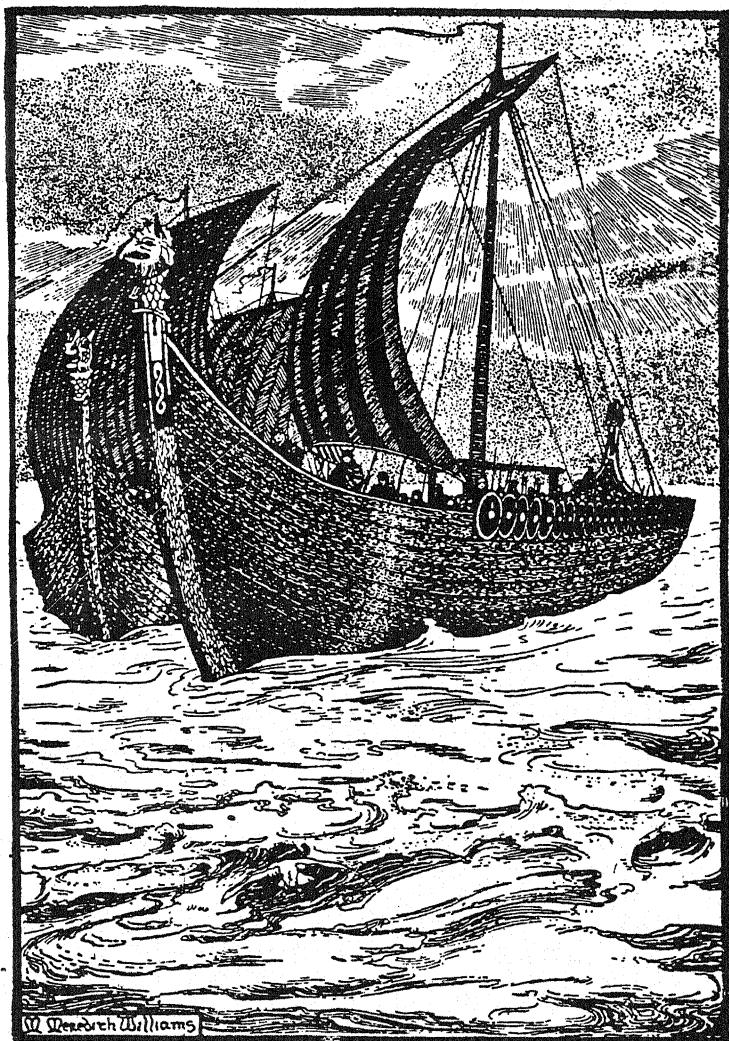
himself and build settlements there, just as his father had done in Greenland. But he was still too young to have a ship of his own and so he had to be content with sea-roving in his father's vessel, where he learned much about boats and tides and heard old tales of battles and saw for himself whether it was possible to raid a foreign village or better to trade peacefully. As time passed, he went upon many voyages, and one year he returned from Norway a rich and bold young man, a worthy son of Eric the Red.

He went to see Bjarni to talk over the plan which had been in his head for so many years.

"Bjarni Herjulfsson, sell me a ship," said he, and Bjarni sold him a long, black ship with a carved, golden dragon at the prow and a brightly coloured sail.

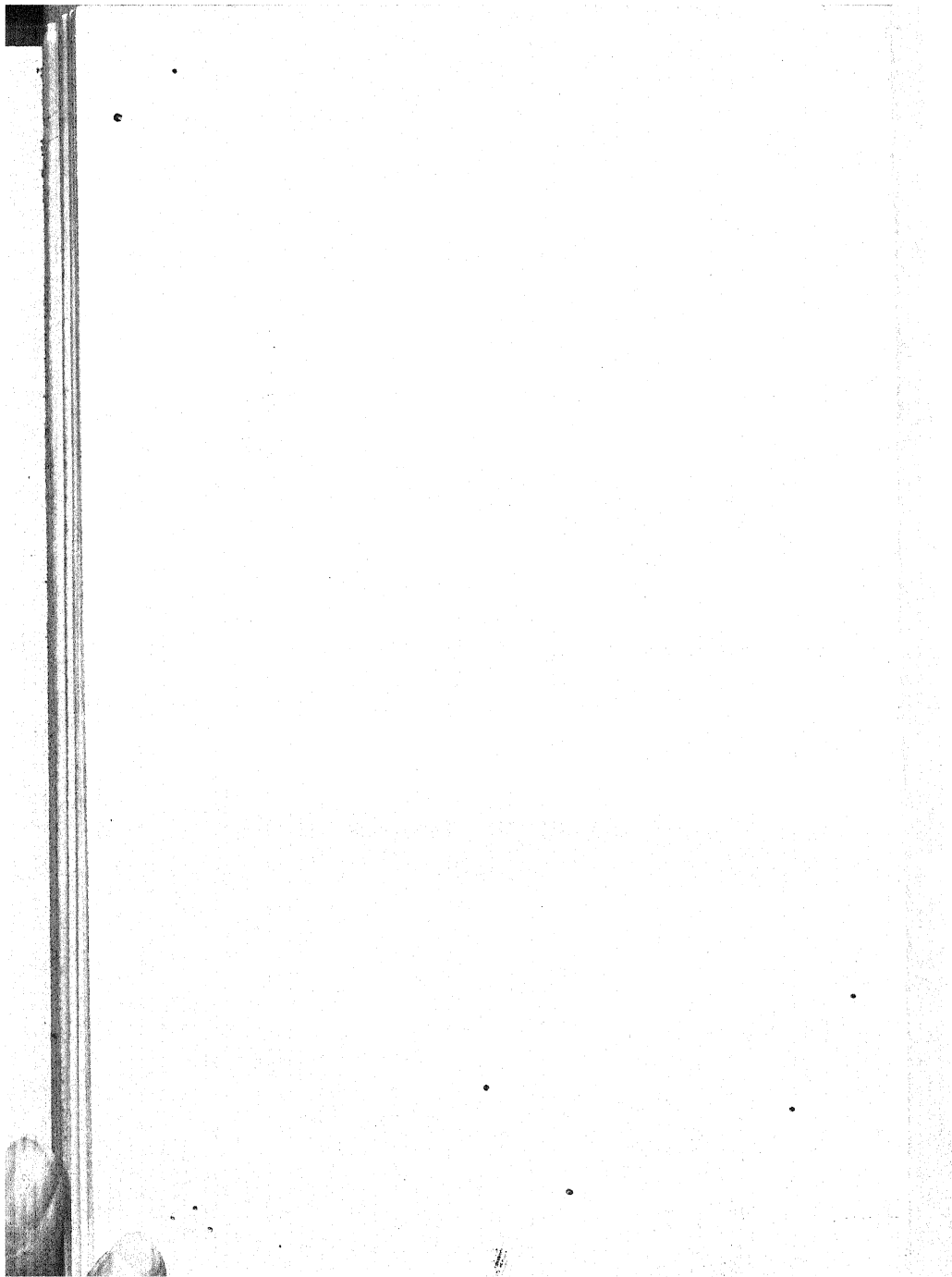
Then Lief looked round him for a crew, and thirty-five men, skilled in seamanship, hardy, bright-eyed, and bold, joined him. The news passed all round Greenland that Lief Ericsson was going a-roving to find the lands which Bjarni had seen many years ago.

Now Lief had a great love and respect for his father, and he went up to the homestead and asked Eric the Red to lead the expedition, but Eric shook his head. He said that he was old and his days for exploring were over, but when he found that Lief was disappointed he agreed to make the journey, and father and son mounted



### VIKING SHIPS

(Drawing by M. Meredith Williams, reproduced by permission of George G. Harrap & Co. from "The Boy through the Ages")



## *THE DISCOVERY OF THE WEST* 63

their ponies and rode down to the beach, where the dragon-ship lay at anchor.

A little crowd followed, anxious to see them start, but just as they came within sight of the ship Eric's pony stumbled and the old man was thrown to the ground. He looked sorrowfully at his son and then at the ship, and the people who stood round him whispered, "It is a bad omen." Then Eric turned to Lief, "Boy," he said, "I am not destined to discover more lands than this in which we are now settled. We must bear one another company no longer. Farewell." He turned and went back to the homestead, and Lief embarked upon the ship with the men who had agreed to go with him.

They sailed on until they came to that land which Bjarni had discovered last, and as they cast anchor and went ashore, they were filled with disappointment, for it was bare and unfriendly. No grass grew anywhere, and in the background great blue glaciers towered towards the sky. The Norsemen thought the whole place destitute of value, and they called it Helluland, which means the land of the flat stone, because the beach and the ground between it and the glaciers were no better than a large flat rock.

When they had returned to their ship, they sailed south until they sighted another coast, and steering towards it, they soon found long stretches of white sand sloping gently to the sea,

and behind them low-lying woods. They explored for some days and everywhere saw woods but no sign of human habitation. They called the country Markland, which means the land of woods, and they were well pleased with it because it seemed fertile and pleasant.

But Bjarni had seen yet another land, and Lief was determined not to go back to Greenland until he had found it, so they set sail once again, steering into the open sea before a north-west wind. In two days they came to an island, where they landed. The sun was shining softly, and there were little pearls of dew lying upon the grass. The Norsemen dipped their hands into it and tasted it, and it seemed very fresh and sweet to lips which had grown parched with the salt sea air. They wandered here and there and saw that they were not far from the coast of the mainland, so they decided to sail into the sound, which lay between the island and the distant cape, and explore. They soon reached the shore, but their ship ran aground for the tide was low and the water very shallow, so that before long she lay a long way from the sea. But the Norsemen were so eager to see the land, which they had discovered, that they did not wait for the tide to rise, and hurried ashore. They found a beautiful river which flowed through a lake, luxuriant grass, woods and hills where flowers grew in great profusion.

“ We will build ourselves houses and pass the

winter here," said Lief, and he ordered his crew to return to the ship and, when the tide had risen, to bring her up the river and anchor in the lake. When this was done they began to fell trees and put up shelters in which to live while they were building houses.

The winter passed pleasantly. There was no lack of food for the river and lake were full of salmon and the Norsemen thought the country a good one because there was no frost in the winter, and cattle could graze all the year round out of doors as the grass did not seem to wither. When the building was finished the Norsemen spent their time exploring. Lief would not allow them to go singly for fear one man alone might get lost, but he divided them into two parties, sometimes going with them and sometimes staying at home.

Among the men who had accompanied him there was one called Tyrker. He was a native of Germany, and Lief was very fond of him. One evening, when the two parties had left the settlement and gone to explore, Tyrker disappeared. For a long time he was lost, and Lief, in great distress, set out with twelve men to look for him. They had not gone very far before Tyrker suddenly appeared smiling and singing.

"Why did you leave your companions, my foster father?" asked Lief, "and why have you not returned before now?"

"Lief Ericsson," said Tyrker, "I did not

wander much farther than you, but I have something to tell you. I have found grapes and vines." He held out his hands and showed the clusters of juicy grapes which he was carrying. The Norsemen tasted them. They knew little about grapes, but Tyrker came from a country where vines grew and were appreciated, and he could tell his comrades of their value.

The next morning Lief called his men together. "There are two things which we must do," said he. "To-day we will cut down vines and gather grapes, and to-morrow we will fell wood. Then we will pile this cargo on my ship and sail home to Greenland. When men ask us for news we will tell them that we have found WINELAND THE GOOD."

So they returned to Greenland, and Lief gained such honour and wealth that men called him Lief the Lucky.

After this, the stories of Wineland the Good were often in men's minds, and Thorwald, Lief's brother, who was now grown up and as eager for adventures as any son of Eric the Red, thought that he, too, would like to see the new country and winter in Lief's settlement by the lake. Lief lent him a ship and thirty men, and he soon reached Wineland and cruised about until he found the camp, where he spent a pleasant winter. But he was not content with exploring only one part of the country, so in the spring he



ordered his ship to be made ready and he sailed farther west, finding many shoals and islands but never a sign of human life.

The following summer Thorwald sailed east, but before he had gone very far the sky grew overcast, great black clouds rolled up, and the sea began to roar and crash against the sides of the dragon-ship. The storm was so fierce that the little band of Norsemen was driven ashore, and the keel of their vessel was smashed. It took them some days to repair the damage, and when their ship was once again seaworthy they set up a keel on a headland and called the place *Keelness* in memory of their accident.

One again they cruised among the fiords, and they saw that the country was well wooded and fertile. One place seemed more beautiful than any other and here Thorwald anchored. He looked about him. Everywhere he saw green forests and stretches of prairie land. "This is a lovely place," said he; "I should like to make it my home." Then he ordered the men to return to the ship and bring tools and provisions ashore. They set out to obey him, but when they had reached the sands inside the headland, to their great astonishment they saw three strange humps on the ground.

"What are these?" asked Thorwald, for they had not been there when the Norsemen had left the shore. Very stealthily they crept nearer, and

gradually made out the forms of three canoes with three men hiding under each. The men were dark skinned and swarthy with thin faces and large bright eyes, and Thorwald, thinking they were enemies, ordered his followers to lay hands upon them. They fought very fiercely, but the Norsemen overpowered them and slew all save one who escaped with his canoe.

After this battle, Thorwald and his men were very tired. A great heaviness seemed to steal over them, and one by one they lay down to sleep with their shields and spears beside them. They slept until far into the night, and did not hear the soft swishing of the sand as the keels of canoes were gently pushed against it. They did not hear the "pad, pad, pad" of naked feet on the wet shore, nor the light splash of paddles wielded by skilful, silent hands. Yet suddenly they all awoke, for they heard a voice cry: "If you love life, arise and return to your ship. Leave this land with all the speed ye may."

They leapt to their feet, instinctively seizing spears and shields. As they did so, countless canoes slid silently round the headland into the fiord, and naked forms ran across the sand, shooting arrows as they came. The Norsemen fought bravely, but much time passed before the enemy launched the canoes and disappeared into the night.

"I am wounded beneath the arm," whispered

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Thorwald as two of his men ran to lift him from the ground. "Leave this land as soon as you can, but carry me first to that headland where I desired to make my home. Perchance it was the truth which passed my lips when I said that I would abide there. Bury my body and put a cross at my head and at my feet so that the place be called *Crossness* hereafter and for ever."

Sorrowfully the Norsemen carried their dying chief to the land which he had thought so beautiful, and when his spirit had slipped away, they buried the body and set up two crosses. Then they filled their ship with grapes and vines and sailed home to Greenland, bringing Lief the Lucky sad news from Wineland the Good.

The following autumn Thorstein, Eric's third son, set sail for Wineland to find his brother's grave, but he never came home, and for ten years no one sought the new country, although tales of these great adventures were told round many a hearth. Then one day, probably about the year 1019, a Viking ship put into harbour near Eric the Red's homestead in Greenland. A trader from Norway stepped ashore and everyone welcomed him, for he brought news of the old homeland. Eric took him to his house and entertained him, and he married in Greenland and lived very happily.

The name of this trader was Karlsefni. While he was with Eric he heard many stories of Wine-

land the Good. Among the young men there was talk of making another expedition, and Karlsefni, who had a fine ship, said that he, too, would go. With those who set out were Bjarni Herjulfsson, who had first seen the new lands, and Thorvard, the husband of Freydis, Eric's daughter. This expedition was on a big scale, for the men took their wives, provisions of salted fish, cheese, and biscuit for the journey, and tools for repairing the ships and building houses.

Eric the Red and Lief the Lucky came down to the shore to see them start, and they gave to Karlsefni two slaves whom the King of Norway had once presented to Lief. These slaves were Scots. Their names were Hake and Hekja, and they were famous for their speed.

"If you desire to explore," said Eric to Karlsefni, "send Hake and Hekja before you. They are so swift of foot that they will run ahead and return quickly with news."

Karlsefni gladly took the two Scots on board, and when a fair wind had risen the ships sailed away in the direction of Wineland the Good. After two days they came to a land of flat stones, that Helluland which Lief had found seventeen years before. On they sailed, changing their course from south to south-east until they came to a large island where they saw one shaggy, lonely bear, so they called the island *Bjarni Isle*, which means the isle of the bear. Again, they

sailed on until they reached the wooded country which Lief had named Markland. They were carried along a desolate, wind-swept coast and saw a cape, where the broken keel of a ship stood upon a rock. They passed it and beat along straggling beaches which were so long that they called them the *Furdustrands* or Wonder beaches. At last they arrived at a little bay, where they anchored. The country in the distance looked green and pleasant, so Karlsefni called Hake and Hekja and bade them explore the land and return again in three days.

The two Scots must have looked very strange as they stepped ashore, for they wore short hooded garments which had no sleeves, but were open on either side and fastened between the legs by a button and a loop. As soon as they had set foot upon the beach, they leapt forward, swift as deer, and were almost out of sight before the Norsemen had realized that they had gone. Within three days they were seen running swiftly towards the shore. They reached Karlsefni at the same moment, one carrying a cluster of grapes and the other an ear of wheat.

Then Karlsefni knew that he was not far from Wineland the Good, so he anchored near a beautiful little island, where he decided to spend the winter. But although this island was green and fair, the Norsemen had a miserable time, for they could find nothing to eat and they nearly

died of hunger. In the spring, very weak and ill, they rowed away, hunting on the mainland and finding eggs and fish for food. After a time they parted company, and Karlsefni with Bjarni and some others coasted south, hoping to find a river which would lead them to the fruitful lands, where Hake and Hekja had seen the grapes and wheat.

Before very long they came to a broad, beautiful estuary and hailed it with delight. On the low-lying ground on either side they found fields of wheat, and leaving their ship they wandered among woods and pastures. All over the hills they found vines, so they knew that they had, at last, reached Wineland the Good. It was a wonderful country. The woods were full of wild animals, which they hunted, and in every brook there were different sorts of fish. When the Norsemen were hungry, they dug pits where the land met high watermark, and when the tide ebbed the pits were full of halibut.

One morning, when Karlsefni was wandering among the fields he saw nine canoes coming round a headland into a little bay. The movement of the paddles astonished him, and he said, "Who may these people be? And why do they wave their oars in this strange manner? Perchance this is some sign of peace. Let us wave a white shield in answer."

A white shield was waved, and the owners of

the canoes approached warily. They were large-eyed, broad-cheeked people with swarthy skins and straggling, unkempt hair. The Norsemen called them Skraelings or savages, and were careful not to offend them. The Skraelings watched the strangers at a short distance and then rowed away, and were not seen again until the winter, when they visited Karlsefni's camp.

By this time the Norsemen had built themselves some wooden houses near a lake, and they meant to colonize the country just as Eric the Red had colonized Greenland. They were busily working one morning in the fields near their settlement, when they suddenly became aware that numbers of canoes were coming towards them.

"The sea," said Karlsefni, "looks as though it were sown with coal. What may this mean?"

The Skraelings came steadily on, beached the canoes, and walked up to the settlement. They were quite friendly, and only wanted to trade. In exchange for skins and grey furs they bought red cloth from the Norsemen. They asked, too, for spears and swords, but Karlsefni would not allow his men to part with any weapon, so the Skraelings had to be content with cloth, and when the Norsemen had very little left, they cut it into long strips of a finger's breadth and it was eagerly bought.

The Skraelings often came on these expedi-



tions, and might have become very friendly with the Norsemen had not something happened which moved them to anger. They had arrived in large numbers one morning, carrying some particularly fine skins, which the Norsemen were preparing to buy, when one of Karlsefni's bulls suddenly rushed bellowing out of the wood and put them to flight. They paddled away in their canoes uttering shrill screams of fear, and for three weeks they were never seen near the settlement.

When they did come again, they paddled round the headland, waving weapons and uttering fierce war-cries. "This means battle," said Karlsefni, and he waved a red shield in answer to the Skraelings and told his men to seize their spears. As he was speaking a rain of missiles fell upon his camp, and his followers were beginning to scatter in retreat when Freydis, Eric's daughter, appeared in her doorway and, pouring scorn upon them, rallied them.

"Ho!" cried she, "Why do such fine men flee from unworthy enemies! Had I a weapon I would fight better than any one of you," and she ran to meet the Skraelings, unarmed and with her hair flying. On the way she stumbled across the dead body of a Norseman, and seizing the sword which lay at its side, she sped on. The Skraelings came towards her with their spears. She gave a loud cry and, unfastening her dress,



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beat upon her bare breast with the sword, and the savages, fearing some witchcraft, took fright and fled.

After this battle Karlsefni thought that the country would be too hot to hold strangers, so he sadly ordered the ships to be prepared and he sailed away from Wineland the Good. On the way home he touched at Markland, where he saw five Skraelings asleep on the beach. Very quietly he cast anchor, and lowering a small boat, rowed ashore and captured two little savages, whom he bore, struggling, into the dragon-ship and carried away to Greenland as a present for Eric the Red.

Many years passed and the expeditions to Wineland and Markland were very few, and the countries where Lief, Thorwald, and Karlsefni had hoped to bring their own people were almost forgotten until, at last, they became little more than fairy tales. But the stories of Eric the Red and Lief the Lucky, of Karlsefni and his adventures were handed down from generation to generation and were carried to Iceland, where the children sat round the fires and listened to them. At first the minstrels told or sang the stories as they had heard them from their fathers, but as time passed and men grew wiser and learned how to write, the adventures of the old Viking chiefs were written down. We call these tales the Icelandic Sagas, and it is through them that we

know how the Norsemen discovered a country west of Greenland.

In the next chapters we shall read how this lost land was found more than four hundred years later by two Genoese explorers whose names were Columbus and Cabot. To-day we call it America, but no one is quite sure where the Vikings really landed. Some people think that Vineland the Good lies on the coast of Nova Scotia, and others say that it forms a part of the eastern seaboard of the United States. Whether these theories are correct or not, we are certain that these fine old Viking warriors were the first Europeans to discover America.

## II

### HOW COLUMBUS DISCOVERED THE WEST INDIES AND SOUTH AMERICA

**I**N the days when Genoa was almost as famous as Venice for its seamen and merchants, Domenico and Susanna Columbus, two poor weavers, were busily teaching their children how to work at a loom and ply a shuttle.

Their eldest child was a boy called Christopher, and as he sat at his work, watching the pattern grow under his nimble fingers, he thought of the geography which he had learned at school in the morning, or smiled over the stories of foreign lands which every Genoese sailor loved to pour into his ears. Others besides the sailors would talk of foreign lands and people, and doubtless the little Christopher had often heard of the Turks, who were so strong that they had fought their way along the shore of the Black Sea and were now trying to cross the Bosphorus and win land in Europe. Christopher was seven years old when the Turks succeeded in their object, and crossing that narrow strip of water seized the beautiful city of Constantinople (1453). The people of Genoa were horrified at the news. They had once owned settlements in lands which

were ruled by the Turks and had lost them, and now they would lose their factories and counting-houses in Constantinople.

The merchants went about with solemn, troubled faces. "It will no longer be safe for European caravans to cross Western Asia," they said. "Our great trade in the East will come to an end unless we can find a new way to India."

Christopher used to hear them talking and often, on his holidays, he strolled to the harbour and wondered whether the Genoese ships would ever find the new road to the East. Perhaps he said to himself: "I wish I could go to sea!" But his parents were weavers so he was expected to follow their craft, and ships and sailors could be nothing more than day-dreams. Yet sometimes a dream may come true, and, in the case of Christopher Columbus, this really happened. He grew from child to boy, and from boy to man, busily weaving but learning as much as he could about the world and then, at last, he went to sea.

The young man was engaged by a firm of Genoese merchants, who sent him on several voyages, and he soon gained experience and learned many useful things about navigation and the nautical instruments of his day.

One of his voyages brought Columbus to Portugal, and after a time he made up his mind to

live in Lisbon, where he married and had a little son of his own, whom he called Diego.

The family lived happily in Portugal, and Columbus made many friends, for the Portuguese were adventurous sailors who loved to send their ships on voyages of discovery, and since Columbus had been to sea he was never tired of hearing tales of naval exploration. In these days there were many such stories, for the Portuguese had not yet discovered the way to India by sea about which we read in the story of Vasco da Gama. They were still exploring the coast of Africa, hoping that if once they could come to the end of that continent they could sail round it and perhaps find India on the other side. All the great seamen, all the people who studied geography and mathematics, talked of this wonderful idea, and Columbus listened and thought. He was now paying more attention than ever to winds and tides and to the lore of sailors, for his brother Bartholomew had come to live in Lisbon and had taken up the new trade of sea-chart making. He shared his knowledge with Christopher and the two brothers became more and more interested in the ocean. Many a time they strolled down to the harbour and talked to the sailors.

Some of the old mariners shook their heads. "Gentlemen," they said, "we sail south, south, south along a coast which never ends. We

should go west. Far beyond the Canary Islands, when the sky is clear and the water smooth, we have seen a faint blue line upon the horizon. Surely this is some unknown land? Did not our fathers tell us how, in the days of old, when the Moors defeated the last Kings of Spain, five bishops sailed to the west and found an island where they built seven fair cities? Why do we seek for India? Let us sail west and find the Isle of the Seven Cities."

And others would say: "'Tis true. But, sirs, there is yet another island. Long, long ago there were two holy men, St. Malo and St. Brandan, who built themselves boats and went to sea with three thousand monks, seeking an island which always seemed to move away. Sail westward, gentlemen, and follow the blessed saints."

The two brothers had heard many such legends, and knew that mythical islands, which no one had seen, were marked upon the maps. Why should they not follow the sailors' advice and sail to the west in search of new lands? Wise astronomers and learned geographers believed that the world was a sphere and that it was possible to sail round it. If this were true, might it not be possible to find India by sailing to the west? But what lay between the east coast of India and the Azores Islands? Columbus thought he knew. "If I sail westwards," he said, "I may find those fabled isles of which the

sailors talk, or perhaps that *Cipangu* (Japan) which Marco Polo saw more than a hundred years ago."

So he drew a careful plan, showing the route which he proposed to take and giving his reasons. When all was ready he went to the Court, and asking for ships and sailors, promised to win new glory for Portugal. But the King's councillors laughed. Tradition tells us that they wanted to find out whether the idea was a good one, and so they sent an expedition westwards without letting Columbus know. The stormy weather discouraged the sailors, who returned saying the voyage was impossible, so the King of Portugal and his advisers would not listen to Columbus, and even the people in the streets pointed at him, saying: "There goes the madman who wants to find a new world!"

It was very discouraging, but Columbus was so determined to sail to the west that he never gave up hope. Yet how could he carry out his plan? He was an unknown foreigner who had neither ships nor money. The Portuguese would not listen to him. They could think of nothing but sailing to the south round Africa.

"I will try Spain," thought Columbus.

He was beginning to feel friendless and sad. As his brother stayed in Portugal and his wife was dead, his only companion was little Diego, who must have grown tired and fretful on the



journey to Spain, for Columbus was too poor to hire a horse or a mule and had to travel on foot.

The father and son toiled across hill and valley until they came to Andalusia. On a promontory near the river Tinto stood the old Franciscan monastery of Santa Maria de la Rabida, which overlooked the port of Palos. A sandy road led to a door in the wall. Columbus rang the bell.

"Can you give my son a little bread and a draught of water?" he asked when a monk peered through the grille.

"Come in. You are welcome," said the monk, and unfastening the door, led the way to the refectory.

When the strangers had supped they were given beds and for many days Columbus lodged in the monastery. Here he made friends with a young monk who spent much of his time in reading old books and studying astronomy and other such sciences. This monk was so sympathetic that Columbus told him of his plan to sail away west of the Canaries. The idea was received with the greatest interest and joy.

"Yours is a noble work, my brother," said the monk, "for you will carry Christianity across the sea." And from that moment Columbus thought long and earnestly about the religious side of the enterprise.



Leaving Diego with the monks, he went to Seville, where he earned a living by selling books. The men of learning who came to buy from him soon began to like this keen-faced Genoese who talked so enthusiastically about the sea. Little by little they discovered that he had a great desire to explore and some plan which he would not reveal. After a while they gave him introductions to gentlemen of the Court until, at last, he was able to lay his plans before King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella.

This was a great day for Columbus but, alas, once again he was disappointed. Although the Queen seemed interested and promised to help, the King paid little heed. He was busy with affairs of state, for he was fighting against the Moors, and his attention was fully occupied in trying to drive them from his country. He ordered a commission of wise men to consider and report upon the idea, and when they dismissed it as absurd, he took no further notice.

Poor Columbus was in great distress. Day after day, month after month, he sought new friends, and if they were sympathetic he begged them to see the King. Fortunately, he knew many people at Court, and so his idea was kept alive, and very soon Queen Isabella became almost as keen on the adventure as Columbus. But still the people of Spain laughed and the King was indifferent. Columbus, in despair, offered his

scheme to his own city, Genoa, and to Portugal again. He even sent his brother, Bartholomew, to talk it over with the English King, Henry VII, but no one would take the idea seriously. For six years Columbus waited, and as the days passed wearily and fruitlessly, he grew more and more unhappy.

“ Full little knowest thou, that hast not tried,  
What hell it is in suing long to bide :  
To lose good days that might be better spent,  
To waste long nights in pensive discontent ;  
To speed to-day, to be put back to-morrow,  
To feed on hope, to pine with fear and sorrow ;  
To fret thy soul with crosses and with cares ;  
To eat thy heart with comfortless despairs ;  
To faun, to crouch, to wait, to ride, to run,  
To spend, to give, to want, to be undone.”

At last a day came when King Ferdinand conquered the Moors of Granada and was able to think of other things. His courtiers reminded him of Columbus, and Queen Isabella spoke of the great glory which Spain would win if her ships discovered new islands, or the rich eastern countries of Marco Polo's book. After a little hesitation Ferdinand promised to help Columbus but he was very much astonished at the conditions which the Genoese made. Columbus, was not an unselfish explorer whose sole desire was to bring honour to Spain. He asked for ships and men, but he wanted other things too.

If there were precious metals in the lands which he hoped to discover he wanted one-tenth for himself, one-tenth, too, of all the merchandise which could be exported. He also asked that he might hold for life the titles "Admiral of the Ocean" and "Viceroy" of any new continent or island which he might discover. The King thought that the terms were preposterous, and refused to listen to Columbus, who disconsolately mounted a mule and set out for France, intending to offer his services to the French King.

Before very long, however, a messenger came galloping after the mule and its rider, and Columbus turned once again towards the Spanish Court. People say that Queen Isabella was in great distress when she heard that he had gone, and vowed that she would sell all her jewels to buy him a ship. We cannot tell whether this story is true, but we know that Columbus came back to Spain and set out on his great adventure in 1492.

He must have felt relieved when at last he left the Spanish shore. The days which he spent at Palos, while his vessels were being equipped, were discouraging and unpleasant. When he walked in the streets he was greeted with frowns and curses. The people were horrified at the nature of the expedition.

"We will not sail into the unknown seas," they cried. "We shall perish in those mysterious

enchanted lands where men have the heads of dogs, and where the sea-serpent lashes its tail among the waves."

When the King and Queen ordered the magistrates to press into service such ships and crews as were suitable, there was consternation, and in spite of the punishments which were threatened, the people did their best to delay the voyage. The sailors deserted and criminals from the prisons were sent to take their places. The caulkers were careless and would not obey orders. Columbus began to feel that the expedition would never start. The difficulties might have been even greater if a young man had not come to the rescue. This was Martin Alonzo Pinzon, a rich and enterprising navigator who had vessels and seamen in his own employ. Martin was eager to join Columbus, for he felt certain that if the ships sailed to the west they would reach Japan and India. He had even persuaded Ferdinand and Isabella to give him letters to the Great Khan, who lived, so Martin thought, in Japan.

Martin and his brothers were related to many of the seafaring people of Palos, and with their influence and help Columbus was able to set sail. The name of his flagship was the *Santa Maria*. She was very small, only about 93 feet long and 25 feet broad. There were also two boats, called caravels, which were commanded by Martin

Pinzon and his brother, Vicente. These two caravels, the *Pinta* and the *Nina*, were so small that to-day we should think them little better than sailing or pleasure boats. They had no decks in the middle and were built high at the prow and the stern, with forecastles and cabins for the crews.

The vessels set out for the Canary Islands, but three days after they had started the *Pinta's* rudder became loose. Two of the sailors, anxious to return and terrified of the unknown dangers, had broken it, hoping that Columbus would be forced to turn back. But Martin Pinzon was in command of the *Pinta*, and as nothing would have induced him to abandon the voyage, he tied up the rudder with ropes, and when the ships reached the Canaries he made the sailors repair the damage.

Three weeks passed before they could continue their voyage, and then they left the Canaries and sailed away into the unknown ocean. When the last trace of land slipped from their sight the sailors began to lose courage. Behind them lay all that was dear, in front mystery and danger. They grew sad without giving their reasons and were alarmed at the steadiness of the trade wind which bore them across the Atlantic. They looked askance at the Admiral and murmured to one another: "We shall never see our homes again, for in these seas

no wind ever blows towards Spain." Soon the pilots noticed the westerly variation of the compass, which they did not understand.

"What magic influence is at work?" they cried. "If the needle ceases to be our guide we shall perish."

Columbus tried to invent a reason for this phenomenon, but the sailors and the pilots were terrified and begged him to take them home.

"We have come far enough," they cried.

But they did not really know how far they had sailed, for although Columbus was carefully reckoning the miles, he kept a false log to show the sailors, fearing that they would mutiny if they discovered what a vast tract of ocean lay between them and their homes.

On and on sped the ships, while the sailors became more and more anxious. After a time herbs and weeds came drifting from the west. Some were still green as though they had lately been washed from the land. On one of them the men saw a live crab. A white bird flew round the ships, and tunny-fish played in the water. These were hopeful signs and the sailors plucked up courage, particularly when they saw a flock of small birds, too little and feeble to fly far from land. But just as they had begun to grow more cheerful a sudden and profound calm set in, and the water, as far as the eye could reach, was covered with weeds. Columbus had reached the

Sargasso Sea, and his ships became entangled in that great shifting mass of submarine plants. The terrified men thought that the sea was growing shallow. "We shall run aground," whispered some. "We shall be lured on to rocks and shoals," said others. But Columbus dispelled their fears by sounding with a deep-sea line and finding no bottom.

A heavy swell drove the ships clear of the weeds, and they sailed farther west. More birds hovered about the masts and the sailors began to scan the horizon for land, for the King had promised thirty silver crowns to the man who first sighted the unknown coast. One morning towards the end of September there was a cry from the stern of the *Pinta*.

"Señor, I claim the reward. Land, land." It was Martin Alonzo Pinzon.

The sailors shaded their eyes and saw in the south-west a dark shadow. Columbus knelt to pray. A solemn chant floated across the water from ship to ship. "Gloria in Excelsis Deo," sang the sailors with bowed heads.

The ships altered their course and stood all night to the south-west, but when day dawned there were cries of distress and fear. The land had vanished. It was nothing but an evening cloud.

Columbus and the two Pinzons did their best to encourage the disappointed men, but the



crews were growing restive. There is a legend which tells us that they threatened to throw Columbus overboard unless land were sighted within three days, but no one knows whether this is true. Fortunately for everyone, the signs of land gradually increased. Man-of-war birds and boobies flew round the ships. Reeds, sticks, and a branch of red berries floated by, and some sandpipers hovered about the masts. A green-fish, which seldom swims far from the rocks, was seen near the surface of the water, and, to his great joy, one of the men saw a staff, artificially pointed. That night, when many of the sailors were asleep, Columbus himself saw a tiny spark of light on the horizon. It rose and fell with the motion of the ship, and looked as though it might come from a candle. Columbus urged his men to keep watch, and promised to give a silk doublet as well as the King's reward to the man who first saw land.

The men strained their eyes, and as the ships sailed nearer to the light they heard the sudden boom of a gun from the *Pinta* and the cry of "Land, land, land!"

When day dawned the sandy shore of an island stretched before the delighted travellers. The air smelt balmy and aromatic, and Columbus wondered whether he had reached the golden land of Japan, some Indian spice island, or one of



those legendary isles of which the Portuguese sailors had told so many stories.

Green trees and fresh grass grew in great luxuriance, and running from the woods down to the shore, with looks of wonder and delight, came the native inhabitants, brown-skinned, soft-eyed, and gentle. When Columbus cast anchor and went ashore in a small boat they were scared of his shining armour and white skin, and ran away to hide themselves among the bushes, but every now and then they peeped out to see what was happening. When they found that the strangers were doing no harm, they crept a little nearer and gazed with round, astonished eyes as Columbus planted the royal standard of Spain in the ground, named the island San Salvador, and solemnly took possession of it on behalf of the King and Queen of Spain. He then called upon all who were present to take the oath of obedience to him as Admiral and Viceroy.

During this ceremony the natives gradually drew nearer, and the boldest began to touch the Spaniards' armour and stroke their beards and faces, sometimes falling down and kissing their hands and feet as though in worship, sometimes pointing to the sky as if to suggest that the strangers had fallen from heaven.

Columbus, who was much pleased with their

gentleness and simplicity, wrote descriptions of them in his journal.<sup>1</sup> "I," he wrote, "that we might form great friendship (for I knew that they were a people who could be more easily freed and converted to our holy faith by love than by force) gave to some of them red caps and glass beads to put round their necks, and many other things of little value which gave them great pleasure and made them so much our friends that it was a marvel to see. They afterwards came to the ship's boats where we were, swimming and bringing us parrots, cotton threads in skeins, darts, and many other things." . . . "They are very well made with handsome bodies and very good countenances. Their hair is short and coarse, almost like the hairs of a horse's tail. They wear the hairs brought down to the eyebrows, except a few locks behind, which they wear long and never cut. They are the colour of the people in the Canary Islands, neither black nor white. Some paint themselves white, others red, and others of what colour they find. Some paint the faces, others the whole body, some only round the eyes, others only on the nose. . . . They neither carry nor know anything of arms, for I showed them swords and they took them by the

<sup>1</sup> This and the following quotations from the journal are taken from *The Journal of Columbus during his first Voyage, 1492-3*, translated with notes by C. R. Markham, 1893. Hakluyt Society, vol. 86.

blades and cut themselves through ignorance. They have no iron, their darts being wands without iron, some of them having a fish's tooth at the end and others being pointed in various ways. They are all of fair stature and size, with good faces and well made. . . . They should be good servants and intelligent, for I observed that they quickly took in what was said to them, and I believe that they would easily be made Christians, as it appeared to me that they had no religion. I, our Lord being pleased, will take hence at the time of my departure, six natives." . . . "They came to the ship in small canoes, made out of the trunk of a tree like a long boat, and all of one piece and wonderfully worked considering the country. They are large, some of them holding from forty to forty-five men, others smaller, and some only large enough to hold one man. They are propelled with a paddle like a baker's shovel, and go at a marvellous rate. If the canoe cap-sizes they all promptly begin to swim, and to bale it out with calabashes that they take with them." . . . "Their beds and bags for holding things are like nets of cotton. Their houses are like booths and very high, with good chimneys. Among many villages that I saw there was none that consisted of more than twelve to fifteen houses." . . . "I was attentive and took trouble to ascertain if there was gold. I saw that some of them had a small piece fastened in a hole they have in the

nose, and by signs I was able to make out that to the south or going from the island to the south, there was a king who had great cups full and who possessed a great quantity."

When Columbus heard about this gold he felt sure that he was near to those rich eastern lands which the Portuguese had been seeking, and because he thought that the islands scattered around San Salvador were on the eastern side of Asia, not far from Japan and India, he called them the West Indies, and described the natives as Red Indians. He had no idea that he was far from the Indian Ocean, and that this labyrinth of islands lay near a great unknown continent.

After he had spent some time in San Salvador he set out to explore, and touching upon many of the islands he claimed them for the King and Queen of Spain. He called one Fernandino after the King, and another Isabella after the Queen. Wherever he went he was enchanted by the beautiful scenery, and wrote in his diary: "I can never tire my eyes in looking at such lovely vegetation, so different from ours. I believe that there are many herbs and many trees that are worth much in Europe for dyes and for medicines; but I do not know, and this causes me great sorrow. . . . I found the smell of trees and flowers so delicious that it seemed the pleasantest thing in the world." Of the island which he called Isabella, he wrote: "If the others already

seen are very beautiful, green and fertile, this is much more so, with large trees and very green, and the herbage like April in Andalusia. The songs of the birds were so pleasant that it would seem as if a man could never wish to leave the place. The flocks of parrots concealed the sun; and the birds were so numerous and of so many different kinds that it was wonderful. There are trees of a thousand sorts, and all have their several fruits; and I feel the most unhappy man in the world not to know them, for I am well assured that they are all valuable. I bring home specimens of them and also of the land."

For ten weeks Columbus cruised among the islands, during which time the *Pinta* sailed away from the other two ships in search of gold. Columbus, too, sought for gold, but although he was at first not very successful in this respect, he was sure that the gums and herbs which he was collecting would prove valuable. The natives willingly showed the Spaniards the most useful plants and roots, and amazed them by making a sort of bread from yams and smoking the rolled leaves of a weed, which they called tobacco.

Columbus was careful to make friends with the natives, and always treated the caciques or chiefs with great ceremony. One day when the *Santa Maria* lay at anchor in a bay of a beautiful island, which he had named Hispaniola, a large canoe came alongside. It was paddled by the

messengers of a powerful cacique, called Guacanagari, who invited the Spaniards to visit that part of the island over which he ruled. Scarcely had Columbus accepted the invitation when his ship was surrounded by a hundred and twenty smaller canoes, loaded with fresh water in earthenware jars, fish, and bread which had been sent as presents from the cacique. Columbus thankfully received the gifts and was delighted to hear that there were great quantities of gold in a place not far off.

When all was ready he set sail, but he was very tired, for he had had no sleep for two nights. As the sea was calm he went below, leaving the ship in charge of the man at the helm. Now he had always given orders that the tiller was never to be entrusted to the ship's boys, but he had scarcely turned his back when the man at the helm disobeyed him, and leaving a lad in charge fell asleep. All went well until two o'clock in the morning, when the current carried the *Santa Maria* very gently on to a sand-bank. The boy felt the rudder touch and heard the rush of water. "Help!" he cried, "Help!" but before Columbus had reached the deck the ship had heeled over and was deeply embedded in the sand. Do what he would, the Admiral was unable to save her, and could only send two sailors ashore to ask Guacanagari for help.

When he heard of the ship's fate Guacanagari

burst into tears. He ordered canoes to be sent to land the stores, provisions, and valuables, and set guards round two large houses where he placed the Spaniards' property. The cacique and all his relations did their best to help, and at sunrise Guacanagari went to see Columbus on the *Nina* and promised to lend him as many houses, canoes, and men as he desired. He was a gentle, courteous chief, and the Spaniards grew very fond of him. "The king and all his people wept," wrote Columbus in his diary. "They are a loving people without covetousness, and fit for anything . . . there is no better land nor people. They love their neighbours as themselves, and their speech is the sweetest and gentlest in the world, and always with a smile. Men and women go as naked as when their mothers bore them. . . . They have very good customs among themselves. The king is a man of remarkable presence, and with a certain self-contained manner which is a pleasure to see. They have good memories and ask the use of everything they see."

Columbus soon made friends with Guacanagari, who even gave him permission to build a Spanish fortress in Hispaniola. The smallest gifts were a source of great delight to the cacique, who was only too glad to give lumps of gold in return for gloves, needles, and bells. He once held a banquet in honour of Columbus and



invited five kings to be present. When Columbus was led into their presence to a couch in the place of honour, Guacanagari rose and taking off his crown put it on the Admiral's head. Columbus was wearing a collar of different coloured beads and a cloak of fine cloth. He immediately dressed the cacique in both, and sending to the ship for a pair of coloured boots, put them upon his feet and finally presented him with a large silver ring. The other kings were very much pleased and gave Columbus two heavy pieces of gold.

By this time Columbus had received many presents of gold, but he had not yet found the lands from which it came. He decided, therefore, to explore a little farther. The Spanish fortress had been completed, so Columbus left there thirty-nine men with sufficient provisions and firearms to last for a year. Giving them orders to seek for gold, he fired a salute and sailed away, while Guacanagari watched him sorrowfully from the shore.

Meanwhile the *Pinta* had returned, so the two little vessels cruised among the islands, and whenever Columbus landed he named the spot and took possession of it for the King and Queen of Spain. On one island the Spaniards had a serious fight with the natives. They had landed in search of yams, when they suddenly came upon fifty men crouching behind trees. The men looked very fierce and were clutching bows and



arrows which the sailors tried to buy in exchange for beads and coloured cloth. After selling two bows the Indians refused to part with any more, and shouting their war-cry began to fight. In the skirmish two of them were wounded, whereupon the others fled.

After this adventure the *Pinta* and *Nina* turned once again in the direction of Spain. The sailors were delighted to be going home. "Every seaman will envy us," they thought, "for we have helped to open a new way to India." They were as unconscious as their Admiral of the great discovery which they had made. But they had little time to talk about the glory which would be theirs, for before very long the ships met such bad weather that they were in danger of being dashed to pieces. Columbus feared that they would all be drowned, and that the story of the wonderful voyage would be lost, so he wrote an account of his discoveries on a piece of parchment, and rolling this into a waxed cloth, he had it battened into a barrel which was thrown into the sea.

The weather was so bad that the two ships were driven apart, and the *Pinta* reached Spain before the *Nina*, which was obliged to take shelter in Portugal. The Portuguese did not, at first, receive Columbus in a friendly way. They were jealous because they had hoped to be the first to find India, and they thought, wrongly

as we now know, that Columbus had forestalled them. But the King of Portugal pretended to be glad and promised to send the news to Spain, so that when Columbus arrived at Palos an eager crowd was waiting on the shore.

His arrival was very different from his departure. Instead of meeting lowering looks and curses, he was greeted with smiles and cheers. His journey from Palos to Barcelona was one long triumph, and when he entered the city gates the people could scarcely contain themselves for joy. A splendid procession was arranged. First came the six Indians whom Columbus brought back with him, painted according to their custom and wearing all their golden ornaments. Then came a number of Spanish sailors carrying live parrots, stuffed birds, strange animals, and rare plants from the unknown islands. After them followed attendants with Indian crowns, bracelets, and other decorations, all arranged to the best advantage so that everyone might know how rich were the lands which had been discovered. Then came Columbus himself, on a horse gay with coloured trappings and followed by a brilliant cavalcade of all the greatest noblemen and courtiers. The streets were so thronged with spectators that the procession could scarcely pass. Windows, roofs, and doors were crowded. People even climbed upon the walls and up trees to get a glimpse of their hero.

“ Long live the Genoese! ” “ Hail to Columbus, our Admiral! ” they cried, waving flags, scarves, and hats.

With their cheers and clapping ringing in his ears Columbus passed into the courtyard of the palace and the iron gates clanged behind him.

The King and Queen were, of course, delighted with his news and very soon the story of the voyage spread far and wide. A new spirit of adventure was born, not only in Spain, but in other European countries. Many a young man longed to seek his fortune in the new lands and to sail a little farther so as to find the kingdom of the Great Khan, which Columbus assured them was near to his islands.

Greed for gold and desire for adventure made Spaniard after Spaniard eager to join Columbus, so that when he set sail for a second time he had no difficulty in manning his ships. He had now a fleet of seventeen vessels and fifteen hundred men, and he must have been full of hope when he left behind him the cheering crowd and noted the eager enthusiasm of all the young adventurers who were going to colonize his lands. But his hopes began to fade even as he reached the island of Hispaniola. He fired a salute and waited for the answering “ Boom ” which should have come from the Spaniards in the fortress. There was no reply. Only the echoes from his own gun broke the stillness. He fired again, and

when there was no answer he went ashore. All that was left of his fortress were the blackened ruins of a few stone walls and the white bones of human skeletons.

Why had the kindly "Indians" betrayed him? It was not long before Columbus could answer that question for himself, and he found his answer in the behaviour of his own followers. This crowd of undisciplined adventurers seemed to care for nothing but wealth. Colonization for the sake of Spain meant little to them. They wanted, not only to grow rich, but to grow rich quickly. They forced the "Indians" to work for them and treated these gentle people with such cruelty that they grew to hate the very sight of a Spaniard. Columbus tried to control his followers, but they grew mutinous, rebelled more than once against him, and tried to choose another leader. A band of malcontents stole some of the ships, and sailing home to Spain, spread evil reports about him, so that when Columbus returned he was not received with the first great enthusiasm, although he had made new discoveries.

Jealousy of the Portuguese, who had by this time doubled the Cape of Good Hope and found India, prompted the Spanish King to send Columbus again to the west. Four times he crossed the Atlantic. He touched the extreme south of North America, reached the coast of

South America, and sailed along Panama, still thinking that he must be near to the lands of the Great Khan. But he was now growing weak and old. Fever and ague were destroying his body, and grief preying upon his mind. For a year he had been marooned in Jamaica, where his health had suffered. He saw with sorrow how the "Indians" were being treated, and yet he was forced to fight against them when they betrayed his own people. He had to fight, too, against Spanish rebels and against the evil stories which were spread about him and half believed by the Spanish sovereigns. The promises which had been made to him were not kept. Little by little his own followers began to take what should have been his, and while they grew rich he was crippled by disease and poverty, until in 1506 he died at Valladolid, a disappointed and embittered old man.

He never knew how much he had done to change the history of the world. He never knew that instead of opening another road to the East he had found a great new continent. The land which he had discovered was not even given his name. This honour was reserved for one of his own employees, Amerigo Vespucci, an Italian provision dealer, who had probably never even seen the New World, but described it so vividly in a book of travel that Europe named the country after him, and to this day it is called America.

### III

#### HOW THE CABOTS DISCOVERED NORTH AMERICA

**I**T was a cold winter's evening in 1495. John Cabot sat before a crackling wood fire poring over a map and thinking deeply. King Henry VII and his Court had come to visit Bristol, and His Majesty had graciously promised to give Cabot an audience, so the merchant was busily planning how best to explain his scheme.

First of all, he must prove that he was an experienced navigator, and to do this he must tell the King a little about his life. Up to the present he had had an interesting career. He was a Genoese by birth, but he had lived for a long time in Venice so had been given Venetian citizenship. Because he had taken so great an interest in Eastern trade, he had sailed in many a Venetian galley to the port of Alexandria, where the spices and drugs of the Moluccas and the precious gems of India were handled. Many a time he had stood on the banks of the Nile to watch the little lighters bearing their sweet-smelling cargo to the port, and he had learned how simple it was to sail up the river from Alexandria, then ride behind the long line of camels, passing through the caravan route to the coast

of the Red Sea, where Moorish dhows carried their dusky passengers to Jiddah. This port led to the Mohammedan's sacred city of Mecca, and Cabot longed to go there, for in those days it was not only a holy city, but an important trading centre in which he thought he might hear all about the lands where the spices grew. After a time Cabot found an opportunity of making this journey. And at each stopping-place he questioned the men in charge of the spice caravans, and always they gave him the same answer.

"Where do your spices grow?" he asked.

The merchants shrugged their shoulders. "We carry them from Mecca. Other caravans from remote regions bring them there. Before that, men say, they are brought on boats from lands which lie still farther to the east."

The more Cabot questioned, the more convinced he became that the spices and drugs grew somewhere in the north-east of Asia, and he thought to himself: "Surely it must be possible to bring this merchandise all the way by sea instead of laboriously carrying it by land over almost three-quarters of the world's surface. Could not sailing ships bring it from the east of Asia to the western lands of Europe?"

With this idea in his mind he studied such maps as he could find, and made journeys to many ports until he had become a skilled



navigator. Then he decided to go to some western port and seek merchants who would be willing to entrust him with a ship in which he would try to reach Asia.

He soon made up his mind to go to England with his family, and after a time he settled in Bristol, an enterprising little seaport, where many foreign merchants, especially Norwegians, lived and grew rich by trade.

At this time Bristol was closely connected with Iceland, where the fishing trade was an important one. In the winter evenings the seamen would often meet round their hearths and talk to one another of the strange tales which they had heard in Iceland. There were stories of mysterious islands and countries which lay far away to the west. The Norwegian merchants, too, half believed these tales, for they and the Icelanders were of the same race, and they never tired of hearing how their Viking ancestors had once found a land where the cattle could graze out of doors in the winter, and where grapes grew wild and in great luxuriance.

The seamen and merchants of Bristol sometimes set out to find these islands. There was one which they longed to reach more than any others. It had been marked on the mediaeval maps for many years as the Isle of Brazil. It lay far out in the ocean to the west of Ireland and was called, by the Irish, the Fortunate Isle or the



Isle of the Blest. There were many myths and stories about it, yet no one had ever been able to find it, although, time and time again, they would sail to the west and think that they saw its blue outline on the horizon.

“On the ocean that hollows the rocks where ye dwell

A shadowy land has appeared as they tell:  
Men thought it a region of sunshine and rest  
And they called it O’Brazil, the Isle of the Blest.

From year unto year on the ocean’s blue rim  
The beautiful spectre showed lovely and dim;  
The golden clouds curtained the deep where it lay

And it looked like an Eden, away, far away.”

When Cabot came to Bristol he was much interested in all these stories, and because this mysterious island was marked upon his map he encouraged people to equip little ships to go in search of it, for he thought that it would make a good stopping-place on the new route to Asia. For seven years he continued to send boats on this vain quest, then came the wonderful year of 1493 with the news that a Genoese navigator, called Christopher Columbus, had sailed to the west and discovered islands on the outskirts of Asia. As we read in the last chapter, nobody knew that Columbus had really found an unknown continent, the Wineland the Good of the Icelandic stories, but everyone rejoiced, thinking

that he had opened a new road to the East. Cabot was just as delighted as the others, for it proved that his own efforts had been in the right direction. After this, when fresh attempts failed to find the so-called island of Brazil, Cabot was determined to try for himself.

And now, as he sat before the fire, looking at his map, he knew what to tell the King. Columbus had made great discoveries for Spain, Cabot would do the same for England. He would find the mystic island, and passing beyond it would reach the mainland of Asia.

He had his audience with the King. He talked of his experience as a navigator, of the knowledge which he had gained in Mecca and of the plan which he had formed for the greater glory of England. Henry listened and sympathized, and in the end he promised to have letters patent issued to Cabot and his sons, which gave them power to "seek, subdue and occupy" any regions which were unknown to Christians. They were authorized to set up the royal banner in such territories and possess them as the King's vassals. One-fifth of the gains which resulted from the voyage were to be reserved for the Crown, but the Cabots alone should have the right of visiting and trading in the lands which they found. Any other British subjects must have a licence from the discoverers on pain of forfeiting both ship and cargo.

Cabot considered these terms sufficiently good, so he waited until the Spring and then began to make his preparations. A year passed before he was ready to sail, and it was not until 2nd May 1497 that he boarded the good ship *Martha*, and with the English flag gaily fluttering, put to sea, followed by a few little caravels. We can imagine how small the *Martha* was when we read that her crew did not consist of more than eighteen men. Cabot had hoped to find a vessel of about two hundred tons, but had not been successful, and as he was determined to make the journey without further delay, he decided to content himself with the *Martha*, a staunch little craft which could weather many a storm.

The ship sped westward, and as Cabot sat looking over the grey water at the distant horizon, he thought of the Isle of the Blest and the many legends which the Icelandic fishermen had told him. Then his mind travelled back to Mecca and he could see the lanky, brown camels moving slowly across the sand, some loaded with spices, gums, and drugs, others carrying the lean dark Arabs in white robes and turbans, sleepily nodding with the heat and the jogging of the camel, but waking at sunset to kneel at prayer with their faces turned towards their holy city. What had they told him, these thin, brown-skinned men? That the spices came from countries still farther east than Mecca? Well,

he was on his way to find them, travelling by a route of which the Arabs had never dreamed. For how many years had he longed to make this experiment? He had thought of it, day and night, even when he was a young man travelling from Venice to Alexandria and moving from port to port. He had dreamed of it when he first went to Bristol and found how eagerly the seamen scanned the ocean and talked of unknown islands. It seemed as though he could not remember a time when he had not wanted to sail to the west.

And now, at last, he had obeyed the call. The *Martha* with the wind in her sails was carrying him westward over the great Atlantic Ocean.

After sailing for seven weeks the ship came within sight of land. She had reached the most westerly point of what we now call Cape Breton. "It shall be called *Cape Discovery*," cried Cabot when he set foot upon the shore, and ordering the royal banner to be unfurled he solemnly took possession of the land in the name of King Henry VII of England.

The crew was eager to explore, and as soon as Cabot had given permission, each man wandered along the shore seeking for what he could find. The land seemed deserted, but in several places they found signs of life. One of the men discovered some snares for birds, another some needles used for the making of nets. Farther

afield they noticed that a few of the trees had been artificially notched by some instrument or sharp stone, but although they sought high and low, they met no human beings.

When Cabot was ready to start again he called his men together and bade them hew down one of the trees and make an enormous cross with the arms of England and of Venice carved upon it. When it was finished he had it planted in the ground so that it could be seen from a long distance, and kneeling in prayer in front of it, he and his men gave thanks for their discovery.

Once again they set out, sailing north along Cape Breton until they sighted the southern shore of a still larger island. The sailors leaned over the sides of the ship and shouted with amazement at the immense schools of codfish which they could see swimming away from the *Martha*. They put a stone in a basket, lowered it and hauled it up again, full of fish, and for several hours this was one of their chief amusements.

On 24th June, St. John the Baptist's Day, Cabot landed and took possession of the island in the same way as before. He called it *St. John's Island*, because of the festival on which he had discovered it. To-day it is known as Newfoundland, and the space of water which lies between it and Cape Breton is called Cabot Strait.

While the *Martha* was lying at anchor the crew

noticed some beautiful white bears and stags. They saw, too, some black eagles and a number of seals, which were playing in the water. The natives of the island were a dark-complexioned people, wearing skins and showing great skill with bows, arrows, and slings. The sailors were amused at their antics but disappointed in the land, which seemed very barren and yielded no fruit.

Thinking that he had certainly discovered some islands on the border of Eastern Asia, Cabot sailed joyfully back to Bristol. He was sure that on his next voyage he would find the Spice Islands, and then he would open trade and make London an even greater centre of the spice traffic than Alexandria.

On 6th August he dropped anchor in Bristol, and when the people saw the *Martha* once again in harbour they all came crowding down to the quays, shouting to one another, "Cabot has come home!" "Have you found Asia?" "Where are your spices?" asked the sailors' relatives, and broke into loud cheers when they heard that Cabot had found an island which had never been seen before.

King Henry was delighted with the news, and told Cabot that he would help to furnish him with a fleet if he would sail again at the earliest opportunity. He gave the explorer ten pounds as a reward. In the account of the Privy Purse

Expenses of Henry VII we can still read the entry: "10th August 1497. To him that found the new isle £10." It does not seem a very large sum, but Cabot was satisfied because he knew that if the King believed in his scheme he would help him to go on a second expedition, and if, this time, he could find the Spice Islands he would reap the greater reward promised in the letters patent.

Henry was, of course, only too glad to help, and he gave Cabot permission to go to any harbour in England and select six ships of two hundred tons or under, with full equipment and "such masters, mariners and subjects of the King" as would willingly go with him. Although he was not usually very generous, Henry was so delighted at the idea of London becoming a centre of the spice trade that he advanced several large sums of money to the people who wished to accompany Cabot.

While these matters were being arranged, Cabot himself went to Lisbon and to Seville to secure the services of skilled seamen and map makers, for in these days the Portuguese and the Spaniards were among the most adventurous navigators in Europe. While staying in Lisbon he happened to meet a man whose name was Joas Fernandes. This man, who lived in the Azores Islands and was known to his countrymen as the "llavrador" (ploughman or landowner),



was an agreeable companion and a daring seaman; in fact, a man after Cabot's own heart, full of the spirit of adventure. To Cabot's amazement he heard that Fernandes had already been on a voyage to the North and had reached a land of many ice-bound fiords and high glaciers, just like one of the mysterious countries of which the Icelandic fishermen had legends.

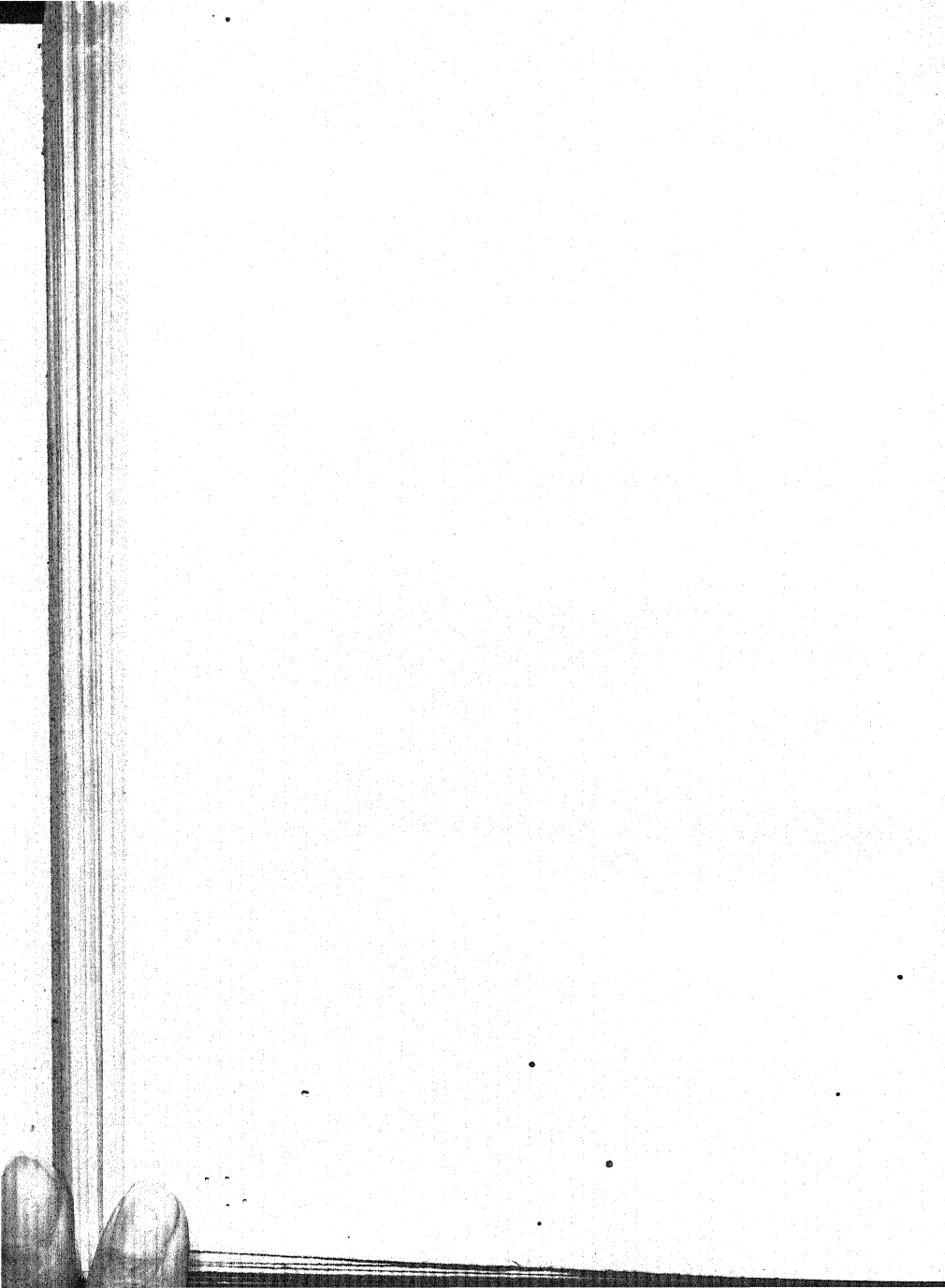
"My friend," said Cabot when he heard the story of this adventure, "come with me on my second voyage and instead of rounding Ireland we will go farther north by way of Iceland and by hugging the coast of this northern land of which you speak we shall, at last, come to Asia and the sunny isles of drugs and spices." Fernandes agreed to this proposal and the two friends returned to England to prepare their ships.

It is said that John Cabot took his son, Sebastian, on this journey. The young man became a famous map maker, and after his father's death made various voyages, at one time placing his services at the disposal of Spain and later working for England.

The little fleet set sail on the second expedition in 1498. It consisted of six ships, which the King's licence had enabled Cabot to choose, and two or three little caravels, which the merchants of London and Bristol had stocked with coarse cloth, caps, laces, bells, and other trifles for trading purposes.







Heading for the west past Iceland they sailed through fair weather and foul until they came to Greenland, that cold country which Eric the Red had colonized many centuries earlier, and which had for so long been nothing more than a legend.

"This is the land which I reached on my journey," said Fernandes.

"It shall be called *Labrador's Land* in your honour," said Cabot.

In later years, when people had learned more about this part of the world, they knew that the country which Cabot and Fernandes had seen was really Eric the Red's Greenland, so they gave it its old name and called a part of the Canadian coast Labrador.

The explorers now began to sail farther north, and were amazed at the length of the days and the clearness of the nights, but the cold troubled them very much and the crews began to grow restless and frightened. They were in the track of the largest ice-floes from the Arctic seas. Their feet were frostbitten and their fingers so numb that they could scarcely haul a rope. The great transparent icebergs terrified them, and they thought that they were in the land of some winter demon.

"Look yonder," they cried hoarsely to one another. "The ice is now green, now blue. There is some wizard in this land."

"This is no place for Christians," whispered

the most timid. "Have ye ever heard of a land where the sun shines far into the night, and hours, which should be dark, are clear as day?"

"See the great floating mountains," screamed another. "They will crush our little ships and freeze us to death. God have mercy on our souls," and they crossed themselves and began to weep.

Soon the icebergs became so thick that navigation was almost impossible, and the air so cold that the men's breath froze in their nostrils and icicles hung from their beards.

"Where is the Captain?" they cried angrily. "Tell him we will go no farther. He told us we should reach a land of sunshine where there were fragrant shrubs and ripe fruits all the year round. Look yonder at the floating ice and snow-clouds! We have been deceived."

They began to shout for Cabot, who came to them and tried to soothe their fears. Clearly Labrador's Land was no part of the Great Khan's dominions. Cabot's theories seemed, so far, to be false, for the coast bent farther and farther eastward. He shook his head and pondered, but he was so cold that he did not seem to be able to think, and the men began to shout and threaten him. Then, as navigation was obviously impossible, he gave orders for the ships to turn back and hoped that *Cipangu* (Japan) and the Spice Islands lay farther to the south.

With a feeling of relief the crews obeyed, but as they were heading west across what is now called Davis Strait they were overtaken by a storm. The crashing of the ice-floes filled the air with a sound that was worse than thunder, and the howling wind seemed to shriek with a thousand voices.

"Mother of God, preserve us from devils!" cried the sailors, huddling together. Their eyes were wild and they trembled as much from fear as from cold, and still the storm continued. The smaller icebergs split with a loud crackling sound, and the floes crashed against each other with such force that the sailors could scarcely hear themselves speak. In their terror they thought that they were passing between two islands full of demons, and even when the storm was over Cabot had much ado to still their fears.

Sailing south, at last they sighted the mainland. It was the coast of the present Labrador, but they all thought that it must be a part of Asia, and were very much encouraged. The crew began to sing and Cabot's spirits rose as the climate grew slightly milder. When they had been sailing south for some distance they put ashore and hailed some dark-skinned natives, who eagerly bartered bows, arrows, and skins for the little red cloth caps and the laces which Cabot had brought with him.

Cabot found these natives gentle and intelli-

gent, but they had no spices to give him, and could tell him nothing of the beautiful cities which he was seeking. So he put to sea again, and sailing to the south hugged the coast until he came to that Newfoundland which had been discovered on the earlier voyage. Again, the crews amused themselves by catching fish, and as Cabot sat plunged in thought he could hear their voices.

"Lower your basket! Steady, steady."

"There's food enough to last for many weeks."

"See that white bear. He is eating fish!"

"Watch him catch them. He puts his paw into the water and strikes."

"Nay, watch his brother, yonder great white one with the long fur. There's a fisherman, indeed. He plunges into the water and draws the biggest cod out by the scales."

"Aye, aye! His claws make a fish-hook!"

"Would that the men of Bristol might see these cod."

While the men were amusing themselves Cabot and some others went ashore to question the natives, but they heard no word about rich cities nor islands where spices grew. The natives could tell them nothing but the name of their own country.

"Baccalaos! Baccalaos!" (Codfish land), they said smiling and pointing to the ground, then running to the water and showing the fish. So

Cabot bade them farewell, called his men to order, and put to sea yet again. He followed the coast as far as Cape Race, and so came to an end of the northern regions.

But he was not satisfied. The climate was now more temperate. The breezes were softer and green grass was growing inland. Cabot could not help thinking that he must be approaching those sunny lands which he longed to reach. He was determined not to lose hope, and continuing to take a southerly course, rounded Cape Ray and passed on to that part of the coast which was afterwards called Nova Scotia.

When he landed, a number of soft-eyed, naked men and women with light-brown skins and long black hair gazed at him timidly from behind the trees. He tried to question them, and gave them a few trinkets and some cloth which they examined with the greatest joy, stroking and patting it as though it were some rare treasure.

Cabot was puzzled and disappointed when he saw them. These gentle savages had no jewels and seemed to live in great poverty. They did not understand what was wanted of them when he showed them samples of spices. He was seeking a land of rich cities, where men and women wore jewels and brocades and where the houses were richly hung with silk, and all that he could find were naked men with skins of wild

beasts hanging from their shoulders and a few miserable wigwams, made of branches loosely welded together by dried mud.

"Southward-ho!" he cried again, and there was a note of despair in his voice.

Very slowly he pursued his course, hoping to find either some wonderful city or a grove of pepper trees. Stores began to run short and the men complained of hunger.

"He is mad," they said, but Cabot urged them on.

"Master," they cried, "we starve—you, too, grow thin and pale. Let us go home." But still Cabot urged them on.

Slowly they drifted down the coast until they had almost reached Chesapeake Bay, and then Cabot lost courage. His hopes had betrayed him. There were no cities in this land. If, indeed, it was Asia the wealth of jewels and gold, the fragrant cloves and pepper were in some distant part which he had failed to find. Sadly he ordered the men to change their course. This voyage, at least, was over, but a time would come when he would try again and then, perhaps, his great desire would be fulfilled.

It was a weary group of men that landed at Bristol. Three hundred had sailed with Cabot, but so many had perished in the cold that the little seaport was filled with consternation, and many a sorrowful family thought bitterly of the



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spirit of adventure which had lured their loved ones away.

As for King Henry, he did not welcome Cabot with enthusiasm, for he had brought no spices and had not found the rich golden cities of the East. Yet these adventurers had made a marvellous journey and had added greatly to the scanty geographical knowledge of their times. They had sailed along nearly eighteen hundred miles of the North American sea coast, and it was their charts and logs which enabled other explorers to make yet further discoveries.

## IV

### THE FIRST VOYAGE ROUND THE WORLD

**I**N the year 1519 there was great excitement in the little Spanish town of S. Lucar de Barrameda. Five vessels lay at anchor in the Guadalquiver, and the crew was busily loading them with an unusual cargo. There were cases of looking-glasses, sacks of knives and fish-hooks, bales of common scarlet cloth, which only the poorest Spaniard would buy, and countless brass bracelets strung on to ropes or stuffed into sacks. The sailors pushed them into the holds without so much as a glance of interest and turned their attention to a number of smaller coarse bags which lay in piles on the river's bank. Little boys, idly watching the men at their work, wanted to know what everything contained, and opened round eyes when they heard that five hundred pounds of coloured crystals were being stowed away in the ships to help to pay for the spices which were to be brought back to Spain.

A crowd stood on the banks and talked about the ships and their venture. There was the *Trinidad* which flew the captain-general's flag, the *S. Antonia*, which was bigger than the others,

and the *Concepcion*, the *Vittoria*, and the *Santiago*, which were old and small and in anything but good condition. They were going to the Moluccas for a cargo of spices, but they were going by a new way and under the leadership of a foreigner, a Portuguese. There were many who shook their heads when they heard about the leader and wished a Spaniard had been in his place, but Ferdinand Magellan, who had offered to undertake the expedition, was an able navigator, experienced and trustworthy. He had served for ten years in the Indies, and had even explored the Spice Islands for the Portuguese Government, so that he had greater knowledge than any Spaniard; besides, he had almost become a Spaniard himself, for he had fallen out of favour with the King of Portugal, renounced his nationality, and decided to work for Spain. People were beginning to take an interest in him because he had made such a fascinating suggestion to the Spanish Government. Columbus and the Cabots had discovered a new world in the West, Vasco da Gama had found a way to India by sailing round Africa. Magellan proposed to go all round the world from West to East, returning with a cargo of spices. He would go West to the new world which the Spaniards were already conquering and colonizing, would seek for a strait at the extreme South, and if he found it would pass into the great unknown sea and

sail on, on, on, until he reached the Moluccas and India, when he would come home by Vasco da Gama's route and, hugging the coast of Africa, land at last in Spain. There was much talk about this unknown strait and many believed that Magellan would not find it, and were a little scornful at the idea; nevertheless, they could not help joining in the cheers which greeted him when he came down to the river.

He had with him Juan de Cartagena, a truculent, quick-tempered Spaniard who was captain of the *S. Antonia* and rather resented the superior position which had been given to the Portuguese; Gaspar Quesada, commander of the *Concepcion*, Luis de Mendoza in charge of the *Vittoria*, and his own old friend Juan de Serrao, who had much experience of the East and willingly accepted the captaincy of the *Santiago*. There were others, too, among them Magellan's cousin, some Portuguese sailors as well as the Spanish crews and a young stranger called Antonio Pigafetta, interested in merchandise and navigation and well provided with quills and paper that he might write an account of the great adventure.

The ships set sail to the music of cheers and the soft chanting of Latin prayers. The *Trinidad* led the way, for Magellan had orders from the King that the other ships were always to follow, and that he was to be in constant communication with them. For this reason he carried a large

wooden torch on his poop by which he might signal to the others at night. Each ship was supposed to answer him and to obey his instructions implicitly. This was not difficult, for the captains had been carefully instructed in the code. They knew that if Magellan showed two lights besides the torch, they were to veer or take another tack. Three lights meant that they were to lower the bonnet sail and four ordered them to strike all sails. A great many lights and the firing of a mortar signalled land ahead.

Taking a south-westerly course Magellan sailed in front of the other ships, touched at Teneriffe, and after many days sighted the coast of South America, but all was not well. Ever since the beginning of the voyage ill-feeling had been growing between the Spanish and the Portuguese sailors, and the Spanish captains, instead of being loyal to Magellan, had openly shown their reluctance to take orders from a Portuguese.

Now, before the ships had left Spain, the King had commanded that whenever the weather made it possible, each captain was to communicate with the flagship, salute Magellan, and receive his orders. One evening the quartermaster of the *S. Antonia* hailed the *Trinidad*:

"God save you, captain and master," he signalled.

This was an insult, for Magellan's title was

captain-general, and he, therefore, replied that in future he expected to be properly addressed. Juan de Cartagena swaggered across the deck. He would take no rebuke from a Portuguese, and he answered that the best men in the ship had been sent to salute Magellan, and that if they were not good enough, he might be saluted, next day, through one of the pages. Magellan was very angry, but he was nearing the coast of South America and so bided his time, yet those who knew him saw that his expression boded ill for the unruly captain of the *S. Antonia*. Not long afterwards Magellan had reason to court-martial a sailor for insubordination. He sent for the captains of the other ships, who boarded the *Trinidad* and attended the trial. Luis de Mendoza, who commanded the *Vittoria*, was a friend of Juan de Cartagena. During the court-martial they openly showed their scorn for Magellan, and Juan de Cartagena, seeing that the captain-general paid no attention to their impertinences, repeated his former insults. His lip curled in a sneer. "Bah—" he began, when Magellan suddenly seized his arm.

"You are my prisoner," cried the captain-general.

"To the rescue!" shouted Juan de Cartagena, struggling, but no one attempted to help him, and he and Luis de Mendoza were led ignominiously to the stocks, where they spent the night. Next

morning Juan found that the command of his ship had been placed in other hands. For a while he nursed his rage in sullen silence; then he made friends with the man who had taken his place, and many a time the two were seen with their heads together, whispering.

At St. Julian Bay Magellan ordered the ships to anchor, and because he knew that he had a great distance to travel, and that there was good hunting on the mainland and fishing in the bay, he put everyone on half rations. The sailors began to grumble. "Have we come to be starved?" they asked. "Who is this upstart Portuguese that he thinks he can deprive better men of their food?" They went about their tasks scowling, resentful, openly speaking ill of Magellan. The Spanish captains, still sore that two of their number had been placed in the stocks, and anxious to do Magellan an injury, made no attempt to restore order, and very soon the sailors accosted them and urged them to tell Magellan that they would have full rations or go home.

"Señores," they said, "you see for yourselves how long this coast is and how far behind it the land stretches. 'Tis evident that there is land without a break to the Antarctic pole. The hope of a strait is but a madman's dream. It was not the will of the King that we should do the impossible. His Majesty sets the lives of men



above the value of spices. Speak with the captain-general. We go no farther!"

When Magellan received this message he gathered the men together and addressed them: "Surely," said he, "Castillians are not guilty of such weakness! What cause have you to complain of provisions seeing that the bay yields good water, fish, and fowl? Here you have wood in plenty for fires and repairs, and the ships are short of neither bread nor wine. We have undertaken this voyage by order of the King and cannot turn back. 'Tis true that winter is upon us and that we cannot proceed, but when the spring comes we shall sail on for we cannot fail to find the strait. Where is the spirit of valour with which my comrades were filled at the beginning of the voyage? Where is that desire for the wealth which lies before us? Comrades, the greater the privation the greater the reward."

His speech seemed to hearten the men, and for a while all went well, until the Spanish sailors renewed their quarrels with the Portuguese and the grumbling began again. The bad feeling seemed to be chiefly among the men of the *S. Antonia*, so once again Magellan deprived the captain of his post. Antonio de Coca, who had taken Juan de Cartagena's place, was superseded by Magellan's own cousin, Alvaro de Mesquita. This only increased the trouble, for the captains thought that Magellan was favouring his own



family at their expense, and one morning, when the captain-general invited them to attend mass and to dine with him afterwards, no one appeared. Magellan and his cousin sat at the table alone and wondered what new trouble was brewing.

That night Gaspar Quesada, who commanded the *Concepcion* and had always been jealous of Magellan, boarded the *S. Antonia* and, with Juan de Cartagena's help, seized Alvaro, Magellan's cousin, thrust his arms and legs into irons and set a guard round his door.

The noise of the scuffle, Alvaro's shout for help, and the blows and curses of the rebel captains brought the ship's master to the spot. Cartagena's guard barred his way with drawn swords.

"Gaspar Quesada," he said with dignity, "I must ask you to leave this ship. Your place is on the *Concepcion*."

"What if I refuse?" asked Quesada with folded arms and a mocking smile.

"My answer is: To arms, men of the *S. Antonia*," shouted the master in a loud voice, and his crew seized their weapons.

"Bah!" cried Quesada. "Can we be foiled in our work by this fool!" and he drew his dagger and stabbed the unfortunate master till he died. A second officer ran to the poor man's help and was overpowered. The guard, whom

Juan de Cartagena had placed round the gagged Alvaro's door, threatened to attack the crew.

"We surrender! Disarm us!" said the men, all too willingly, and were locked in Antonio de Coca's cabin.

The mutineers were now in possession. They put all who would not obey them into irons, rifled the stores, and signalled the success of their venture to the *Vittoria*, whose captain, Luis de Mendoza, willingly joined them, assuring his own crew that they could now have full rations and return to Spain.

The next morning Magellan, still ignorant of the trouble, sent a boat to the *S. Antonia* with orders that a watering party should go ashore. "Keep off, if you value your lives," was the answer. "Quesada is captain-general. We take no further orders from Magellan."

The boat returned to the *Trinidad* with its bad news. Magellan did not hesitate. "Return," said he, "to each ship and ask 'for whom are you?'" So the little boat was rowed back and approached each vessel in turn.

"For whom are you?" asked Magellan's messenger when he reached the *S. Antonia*.

"For the King and myself," answered Quesada.

"For whom are you, men of the *Vittoria*?"

"For the King and for Gaspar Quesada!"

"And you, men of the *Concepcion*, for whom are you?"

"For the King and for Gaspar Quesada!" came the answer without a pause.

Then Magellan's messenger rowed to the *Santiago*. "Ho! Ahoy, there, men of the *Santiago*, for whom are you?"

"We are for the King and for his captain-general, Ferdinand Magellan."

The boat returned to the *Trinidad* with these answers and Magellan sat in his cabin and made his plans. First he sent to the *Vittoria* a boat, full of men whose arms were concealed, and when Luis de Mendoza appeared to answer their call he was summoned to the flagship.

"I take my orders from Gaspar Quesada," smiled Mendoza, but the smile died on his lips, and before he had time to snatch his own dagger, he was stabbed and thrown into the water.

Magellan's men boarded the *Vittoria* with a rush. The crew was half-hearted in its support of the mutineers and was easily overpowered, so that three ships out of the five were now in Magellan's hands, and it was an easy matter to guard the mouth of the harbour. When the deck of the *Trinidad* was cleared for action, Magellan prepared to attack the *S. Antonia*, but when they found that they were to fight, the crew of the *S. Antonia* refused. No one would obey Quesada except his own body-servant, and

within a ridiculously short time Magellan was master of the situation.

The ring-leaders of the mutiny were put into irons, flung into a boat, and rowed ashore. Antonio de Coca and Gaspar de Quesada were condemned to death. Quesada's body-servant was compelled to act as executioner, and because the punishment of hanging his own master was so great, his life was spared. Juan de Cartagena, too, was allowed to live, but Magellan refused to take him any farther, and he was driven into the woods to live as best he might. No one ever heard of him again.

For some time after this Magellan remained in the bay. Two months had passed since he had anchored there, and he had seen no human inhabitants. He had begun to think that nobody lived in this lovely part of the country when he suddenly saw, one morning, an enormously tall man, dancing, singing, and throwing sand upon his head.

"A giant! A giant!" cried the sailors as they watched from a distance.

Some of them were much alarmed at the size of the stranger, who wore nothing but the skin of some animal and had his face painted red with yellow rings round his eyes and a heart on each cheek.

"He carries a heavy bow and arrows tipped with flint," said one. "We had best keep our distance."

But Magellan called one of his men and sent him ashore, bidding him dance, sing, and throw sand on his head like the giant, who might take this as a sign of peace. The man obeyed and very soon made friends with the giant and coaxed him into the captain-general's presence. Magellan treated him kindly, gave him food to eat and several small presents which pleased him very much. But when someone showed him a large steel mirror and he saw his own face for the first time, he was so terrified that he fell backwards, knocking down four Spanish sailors. He was quickly consoled by the gift of some bells and a comb, and when he had grown accustomed to the mirror, Magellan gave him a small one for himself and sent him ashore with four armed men. His own companions were hidden among the trees, and when they saw him coming with the comb in his hair and the little bells jingling, they all came running out and began to dance and sing and point to the sky.

They were quite friendly and the Spanish sailors soon conquered their fear of the so-called giants and named them the *Patagons*, from a Spanish word meaning "big feet." From this we get our own word *Patagonian*.

The natives delighted in the Spaniards' society, and one of them, who was taller and even more friendly than the others, stayed in Magellan's camp and became so tractable that

the Spaniards taught him a few Spanish and Latin words. When he could say "Jesu," "Ave Maria," and "Pater noster" in a loud, clear voice, they baptized him, and calling him Johanni, dressed him in cloth breeches, a woollen jacket, a shirt, and a scarlet cap. This pleased the Patagonians, and very soon four others came to the camp. By this time the Spaniards were anxious to capture one of them to take back to Seville, and they decided to do this by means of a trick. They began by loading them with gifts, filling their hands so full of mirrors, bells, knives, and scissors that they could carry nothing more. The wily Spaniards then brought some leg-manacles which the Patagonians admired and wanted to take away but could not carry.

"We use them thus," said the Spaniards, and smilingly clipped them round the ankles of one of the Patagonians. The men immediately understood that they had been tricked, and throwing down their gifts began to roar like bulls and rushed to find their bows and arrows. Two escaped. Another struggled and was badly wounded in the scuffle, while the poor manacled giant was borne in triumph to the ships. His cries brought two of his comrades to the rescue. Still roaring madly they leaped up and down, letting fly their arrows with incredible speed. One of the Spaniards was wounded in the thigh. He died at once, and his comrades tried to

avenge him by shooting at the Patagonians, but they always missed their mark, for the giants sprang hither and thither so lightly that they never seemed to be in the same place for more than a second at a time. The Spaniards were obliged to content themselves with burying their dead and burning all the Patagonians' possessions.

Shortly afterwards Magellan ordered his ships to leave the bay and search for the unknown strait, which he felt sure was not far away. On 21st October, the feast of the eleven thousand virgins, they came to a cape, and as the captain-general did not know what lay beyond it he remained outside and sent two ships to reconnoitre.

Now all this time Antonio Pigafetta, the young stranger, had been covering that paper which he had brought on board with a fine, close handwriting. This is a translation of what he wrote about the great discovery made by Magellan's two ships.<sup>1</sup> "We with the other ships stayed inside the bay to await them. A great storm struck us that night, which lasted until the middle of next day, which necessitated our lifting anchor

<sup>1</sup> This and the following quotations from Pigafetta's diary are taken from *Magellan's Voyage Around the World*, by Antonio Pigafetta. The original text of the Ambrosian MS. with English translation, notes, bibliography and index by James Alexander Robertson. (Cleveland, U.S.A., 1906.)



and letting ourselves drift hither and thither about the bay. The other two ships suffered a head wind and could not double a cape formed by the bay almost at its end, as they were trying to return to join us, so that they thought that they would have to run aground. But on approaching the end of the bay and thinking that they were lost, they saw a small opening which did not appear to be an opening but a sharp turn. Like desperate men, they hauled into it and thus they discovered the strait by chance. . . . Very joyful they turned back to inform the captain-general. . . . We thought that they had been wrecked, first by reason of the violent storm, and second because two days had passed and they had not appeared, and also because of certain signals of smoke, made by two of their men who had been sent ashore to advise us. And so, while in suspense, we saw the two ships with sails full and banners flying to the wind, coming towards us. When they neared us in this manner they suddenly discharged a number of mortars and burst into cheers. Then, altogether, thanking God and the Virgin Mary, we went to seek the strait."

This was a great triumph for the captain-general and to this day the strait bears his name. But Magellan's delight was tinged with anxiety. Just before the strait had been discovered the *S. Antonia* had disappeared. The other ships



sought her for many days, and at last giving up in despair, Magellan ordered a banner to be planted upon the top of a small hill and a letter in an earthen pot buried near by so that the ship might learn the course. But the *S. Antonia* needed no instructions. She was manned by traitors. Every trouble had begun on her deck. She had now turned back and with the wind in her sails was speeding towards Spain.

And now the real part of the voyage had begun. When the other four ships passed out of the strait into the blue, open sea, scarcely a wave ruffled the surface of the water. It was like a vast lake, as tranquil as the sky above it, so peaceful that Magellan named it the Pacific Ocean.

But this calm, windless weather, this great expanse of water with no land in sight, did not make life easy for the sailors. For days and days they made no headway, and even when a fair wind filled their sails the days grew to weeks and the weeks to months before they sighted land. Twice the faint cry of some exhausted sailor, "A coast, comrades!" revived their hopes, but the land proved to be two uninhabited islands with neither birds nor fruit to ease the starving men. For three months and twenty days they were without fresh food. The biscuits which they had brought were long since finished, but they gathered up the crumbs which were swarm-

ing with worms and ate them, ravenously licking their fingers for the last small vestige. They drank yellow, putrid water and even scraped the sawdust from the boards to stay the pangs of hunger. Then, when nothing more remained, they tore down the ox-hides which were used to protect the mainyards, soaked them to a pulp in the sea, and ate them while their wild, frightened eyes anxiously scanned the horizon. No one thought, now, of rebellion. Every arm was too weak to strike a blow, each mind too wan to make a plan. They scarcely thought of Spain for their hearts beat too faintly. Lips were too parched to whisper, "Let us go home"; they could barely breathe the words "Water" or "Food."

Drifting across the Pacific they passed Japan and anchored, suffering and exhausted, before some islands where, at last, they were able to get fresh food and drink the milk of coconuts brought by the natives. They fed, too, upon bananas which they had never yet seen and before long many of them had recovered their health and were greatly interested in the life around them. Antonio Pigafetta, of course, noticed everything very carefully. "They go naked," he wrote of the natives, "and are bearded and have black hair which reaches to the waist. They wear small palm-leaf hats as do the Albanians. They are as tall as we and well-built.

They have no worship. They are tawny, but are born white. Their teeth are red and black for they think that is most beautiful. The women are good-looking and delicately formed and lighter complexioned than the men and wear their hair, which is exceedingly black, loose and hanging quite down to the ground. The women do not work in the fields, but stay in the house, weaving mats, baskets, and other things needed in their homes from palm-leaves. They eat coconuts, birds, bananas, sugar-cane, and flying-fish. They anoint the body and the hair with coconut and beneseed oil. Their houses are all built of wood, covered with planks and thatched with banana leaves. The rooms and beds are all furnished with the most beautiful palm-leaf mats. They sleep on palm straw, which is very soft and fine. They use no weapons except a kind of spear pointed with a fish-bone at the end. These people are very poor but ingenious and very thievish, on account of which we called these three islands the *Islands of Ladroni*. . . . Their amusement, men and women, is to plough the seas with those small boats of theirs. . . . The sail is made from palm-leaves sewn together. For rudders they use a certain blade resembling a hearth-shovel, which have a piece of wood at the end. . . . Those boats resemble dolphins, which leap in the water from wave to wave."

When Magellan thought that the men had

rested sufficiently, he had the ships revictualled and careened and sailed away towards the Philippines. Here he made friends with many of the chiefs, giving them coloured caps and mirrors, and they showed him samples of cloves, spice, and nutmegs which they said were very abundant in some islands farther south. To please them the captain-general invited them on board, where he fired a salute which terrified them so much that they nearly jumped into the sea. When Magellan had pacified them with a few more gifts of combs and scissors, he set a south-westerly course and very soon came to four small islands in the Philippines which to-day are not easily identified.

A little boat was being paddled in the shallow water.

"Ahoy there!" hailed the *Trinidad*.

The startled natives turned and paddled a little way towards Magellan, but were afraid to come too near. Then Magellan's slave, a native of Sumatra, shouted to them and lowered into the sea a red cap and some other trifles tied to a piece of wood. The Filipinos seized the gift as it drifted past their boat and quickly paddled to the shore to fetch their king. He soon arrived in a large boat, seated under an awning of mats, and looked on while his men boarded Magellan's ships and were entertained. The next day Magellan sent his slave to ask for food, and the

king came himself with six attendants and presented the captain-general with several large jars of rice, some pork, and some wine. He boarded the *Trimidad* and was amused and delighted with the sea-charts and much impressed when he heard how Magellan had found the strait and how he had sailed for many moons without seeing land.

"These," thought the king, "must be a great and strong people." Magellan laughingly proved this by setting a Spaniard, fully clad in armour, in the midst of the natives and ordering them to strike him with swords and daggers. The king was speechless.

"I have two hundred such men on each ship," said Magellan, with considerable exaggeration, for less than two hundred and forty men had accompanied him, and many had escaped on the *S. Antonia*, and others had died of starvation in the Pacific.

Full of reverence for such strength the king invited some of the Spaniards ashore. They dined by the light of resin torches, eating freshly cut ginger, fish, rice, and pork in the king's palace, which they reached by climbing a ladder, for it was built like a hay-loft on the top of four poles and thatched with banana and palm-leaves. Pigafetta was lucky enough to be invited, too, and he described the king as "very grandly decked out. . . . His hair was exceedingly black

and hung to his shoulders. He had a covering of silk on his head and wore two large golden ear-rings fastened in his ears. He wore a cotton cloth all embroidered with silk which covered him from the waist to the knees. At his side hung a dagger, the haft of which was somewhat long and all of gold and its scabbard of carved wood. He had three spots of gold on every tooth and his teeth appeared as if bound with gold. He was perfumed with storax and benzoin."

Before leaving, Magellan heard mass and set up a cross on a high hill, telling the king that it would protect him from thunder, lightning, and storms, and that if other Spaniards came to that island and found the cross they would never harm the inhabitants. When they heard this, the king and his people knelt down and adored the cross and promised to help Magellan by lending him pilots to guide him to Cebu and Ceylon.

When the promised pilot arrived the Spaniards sailed away until they came to Cebu in the heart of the Philippine Islands.

"Boom! Boom!" went their guns as the salute was fired. The terrified natives fled, helter-skelter, into the palm-groves while the king's governor came down to the shore and invited the strangers to land.

When they had come into the king's presence, they found that monarch seated, almost naked, on

the ground. He was short and fat and his body was tattooed. Round his throat was a valuable necklace, and two long gold ear-rings, set with precious stones, dangled from his ears. On a mat beside him were two porcelain dishes filled with turtles' eggs, which he was eating, and every now and then he sipped palm wine through four small reeds.

"What is your errand?" he asked, when Magellan's interpreter bowed before him.

"My master is the captain of the greatest king in the world. He is on his way to the Moluccas and desires to buy food with his merchandise."

"He is welcome," replied the king, "but it is the custom of every ship which enters my ports to pay tribute. Behold, a merchant of Siam at my side. Not four days since, his junk came laden with slaves and gold. He remains to pay me tribute."

"Indeed, sire, this may be so," said the interpreter, "yet my master is captain of so great a king that he cannot pay tribute to anyone else in the world. If your majesty wishes peace, peace you shall have, but if you desire war, war shall be your portion."

When the Siamese merchant heard this he whispered to the king: "Look well, sire, these men are the same who have conquered Calicut, Molucca, and the great cities of India. If they are well treated they give good treatment in



return, but if evil is shown them they, too, show evil and worse, as they have done in Calicut and Molucca."

The interpreter, who was listening, understood and he shook his head.

"Nay, sire," said he, "the king of whom the merchant speaks is the King of Portugal. My master serves the King of Spain, who is far more powerful in men and in ships. He is emperor of all the Christians, and if you will not be his friends he will send an army, so great, that none in your kingdom will be spared."

With a low bow the interpreter left the palace and returned to the *Trinidad*. The next morning the king sent for Magellan and said that he wished to exchange a drop of blood as a token of friendship. After this ceremony there was music, dancing, and a feast, and before many days had passed the King of Cebu asked Magellan to baptize him and his people so that they might become the Christian subjects of the King of Spain.

Magellan was, of course, delighted at the proposal. He set a platform in a consecrated square in the middle of the island and decorated it with hangings and palm-branches. On it he placed two chairs of red and purple velvet, surrounded by cushions and palm-leaf mats, and at a little distance, in a prominent position, he put a large cross. The next day being Sunday, he fired a



salute from the ship and went ashore with forty men. First came two Spaniards, fully armed, then two more who carried the royal banner in front of Magellan. A crowd of eight hundred natives followed. Then Magellan sat on the purple chair and the king on the red one, the chief natives on the cushions and the others on the palm-leaf mats. Little speeches were made and the king said he was glad to become a Christian for he knew that he would now conquer his enemies more easily. Magellan replied that all who refused to obey the King of Cebu, who was now subject to the King of Spain, should be killed, and the chiefs who sat around on the cushions cried with one accord, "He is our master." Then Magellan ordered them to burn their idols and worship the cross daily with clasped hands. He led the king to the cross and baptized him, giving him the name of Don Carlo, after the emperor. While the natives were whispering excitedly to one another the queen came into the square. She was dressed in black and white, with a hat as large as a parasol upon her head and a silk scarf striped with gold over her shoulders. She was young and very beautiful, with bright scarlet lips and bare feet. In front of her came three young girls, each carrying one of her hats, and she was followed by a number of naked women with flowing hair and small silk scarves on their heads. Magellan christened her

Johanna, after the emperor's mother, and when she saw a little image of the child Jesus, she begged to be allowed to keep it in place of her own idols.

The Spaniards stayed in Cebu until the middle of April and the king treated the captain-general very kindly and pretended to show him the greatest friendship, but in his heart he was neither true to Magellan nor to the Catholic faith. He had only become a Christian because he thought that if he did so the Spaniards would help him to fight against the surrounding chiefs, and when all were beaten he would become the greatest king in the Philippine Islands. He persuaded Magellan to burn a neighbouring village because one of the chiefs had refused to obey him, and one morning later in the month he sent a message to the *Trinidad* urging the captain-general to lend him some men. When Magellan asked the reason he was told that Citapulaph, a chief on the island of Mactan, had refused allegiance to the King of Spain. Magellan could not overlook this and so he agreed to send sixty men to help the King of Cebu to conquer the island of Mactan.

The next morning a boat-load of Spaniards, commanded by Magellan himself, put ashore on Mactan, discharged a round of artillery, and began to fight the islanders hand to hand, but the treacherous King of Cebu did not send as much

help as he had promised, and the Spaniards were outnumbered. They were only sixty against one thousand five hundred. Their heavy helmets and breast-plates were cumbersome in that hot climate and gave them very little protection for the natives aimed at their legs where they wore no armour. They fought desperately, and Magellan in the thickest part of the battle encouraged them, crying, "On, comrades, on! For God and Spain." Suddenly he staggered and fell on his side while the blood gushed from a wound in his leg. He struggled to his feet, killed a native with his lance, and shouted, "Back, men, to your boats!" Then he tried to draw his sword but an arrow had injured his arm and he had no strength left. With yells of triumph his enemies sprang at him, knocked him down, and stabbed him to death.

Eight of his men were killed and nearly all were wounded. With difficulty they fought their way back to the ships. Their captain-general lay dead in the sand. They were weak from loss of blood and scarcely knew what they were doing as their comrades helped them to embark. "Let us leave this miserable island," they whispered, for each man felt that there was treachery afoot. "Where are the others?" they asked, and learned that John de Serrao, captain of the *Santiago*, was ashore in the power of the king and that others, too, had not returned.

"What shall we do?" they asked one another, and as they spoke they heard cries from the shore and Spanish voices calling for help. They fired a gun and scarcely had its echoes died away when John de Serrao, wounded and bound, came staggering to the shore in his shirt. "For the love of God, fire no more!" he cried, "or they will slay me. I beseech you, comrades, redeem me with your merchandise," and he stretched out his arms towards the ships.

But the Spaniards were afraid. There were some among them, too, who wanted to be masters of the ships, and so they abandoned John de Serrao, Magellan's best friend, and after burning his ship which they could no longer man, they sailed away from Cebu in the direction of Borneo.

It was here that Antonio Pigafetta surpassed himself in description. He had never seen an island like Borneo, and had never been received in such a strange and ceremonious way. "The King of the Island," he wrote, "sent a very beautiful *prau* (boat) to us, whose bow and stern were worked with gold. At the bow flew a white and blue banner surmounted with peacock feathers. Some men were playing on musical instruments and drums. Eight old men, who were chiefs, entered the ships and took seats in the stern upon a carpet. They presented us with a painted wooden jar full of betel and areca (the fruit which they chew continually) and jasmine

and orange blossoms, a covering of yellow silk cloth, two cages full of fowls, a couple of goats, three jars full of distilled rice-wine, and some bundles of sugar-cane. . . . Six days later the king again sent three praus with great pomp which encircled the ships with musical instruments playing, and drums and brass gongs beating. They saluted us with their peculiar cloth caps which cover only the top of their heads. We saluted them by firing our mortars without stones. Then they gave us a present of various kinds of food, made only of rice, some were wrapped in leaves and were made in somewhat longish pieces, some resembled sugar-loaves, while others were made like tarts with eggs and honey. They told us that the king was willing to let us get water and wood and to trade at our pleasure. Upon hearing that, seven of us entered their prau, bearing a present to their king, which consisted of a green velvet robe made in the Turkish fashion, a violet velvet chair, five brazas of red cloth, a cap, a gilded drinking glass, a covered glass vase, three writing-books of paper, and a gilded writing-case. To the queen three brazas of yellow cloth, a pair of silvered shoes, and a silvered needle-case full of needles. . . . When we reached the city we remained about two hours in the prau until the arrival of two elephants with silk trappings and twelve men, each of whom carried a porcelain jar covered with

silk in which to carry our presents. Thereupon we mounted the elephants while those twelve men preceded us afoot with the presents in the jars. In this way we went to the house of the governor, where we were given many kinds of food.

"During the night we slept on cotton mattresses, whose lining was of taffeta and the sheets of cambaio. Next day we stayed in the house till noon, then we went to the king's palace upon elephants with our presents in front as on the preceding day. All the streets from the governor's to the king's were full of men with swords, spears, and shields. . . . We entered the courtyard of the palace mounted on the elephants. We went up a ladder accompanied by the governor and other chiefs and entered a large hall, full of many nobles, where we sat down upon a carpet with the presents in jars near us.

"At the end of the hall is another hall, higher but somewhat smaller. It was all adorned with silk hangings, and two windows through which light entered and hung with two brocade curtains. . . . There were three hundred foot soldiers with naked rapiers at their thighs in that hall to guard the king. At the end of that small hall was a large window from which a brocade curtain was drawn aside so that we could see within it the king seated at a table with one of his young sons chewing betel. No one but women were behind him. Then a chief told us that we could not

speak to the king, and that if we wished anything we were to tell it to him so that he could communicate it to one of higher rank. The latter would communicate it to a brother of the governor, who was stationed in the smaller hall and this man would communicate it by means of a speaking-tube through a hole in the wall to one who was inside with the king. . . .

“ The city is entirely built in salt water except the houses of the king and certain chiefs. . . . The houses are all constructed of wood and built up from the ground on tall pillars. When the tide is high the women go in boats through the settlement, selling the necessities to maintain life. There is a large brick wall in front of the king's house with towers like a fort in which were mounted fifty-six bronze pieces and six of iron. . . .”

Pigafetta and his companions were lavishly entertained and given handsome presents. The king promised to allow the Spaniards to come and trade as often as they pleased and they were all much impressed by his kindness. Nevertheless, they were a little anxious. Their adventures in Cebu had taught them to beware of treachery, and when they saw a number of boats circling mysteriously round their ships as though to cut off the possibility of escape, they became alarmed. They found, all too soon, that their fears were justified, and it was only after a fierce



fight and the loss of several men, that they managed to flee from Borneo. Even then their troubles were not over, for one of the ships ran aground and they were obliged to abandon her.

Passing several islands, they came at last to the Moluccas and entered Tidore. Many of them must have wished that Magellan could have been there, for they had now all but carried out his enterprise. They had reached the Spice Islands by sailing from west to east. The remainder of the journey was simple. It was well known to every Portuguese on board and the Spaniards, jealous as they were of these fine seamen, were willing enough to trust them as pilots along Vasco da Gama's route.

With hearts full of joy they cast anchor and waited to see if they should be well received. To their great delight the king proved most friendly. He revictualled the ships with goats, fowls, bananas, coconuts, and fresh water, built a special house for the Spanish merchandise, and sent a proclamation all round the islands urging every man who had cloves to bring them to the Spanish ships. Never before had the Spaniards known such trading. When they ran short of cloth and other merchandise they bartered their own clothes. They learned that for several years the Portuguese had been trading in the Moluccas and that the natives hated them and were only too pleased to find other buyers. The



old, fat king, with tears in his eyes, swore by Allah that he would always be faithful to the King of Spain, and the chief of a neighbouring island, who had come to make peace with the white strangers, promised never again to give cloves to the Portuguese, but to save them until another Spanish fleet should arrive to claim them.

The ships were now heavily laden with cloves, and after firing a number of rockets to show their content, the Spaniards prepared to go. To their great distress, however, they found that the *Trinidad* had sprung a leak. Their efforts to discover the spot were in vain, and although the friendly king sent to various islands for divers who could remain under water for an hour, no one could find it. The Spaniards reluctantly abandoned the ship and waved a sad farewell to the crew, whom the king promised faithfully to treat as his own sons.

Of the five ships which had started with Magellan only the *Vittoria* was left, and of the many who had started only sixty remained. They sailed away to the south-west, landing at Timor to take in ginger and sandal-wood, and passed on to Sumatra, the island which had filled so many a Spanish head with dreams of wealth. Many were their adventures, pleasant and unpleasant, as they hugged the coast of India, and after crossing the ocean doubled the Cape of Good Hope. Contrary winds and heavy seas

drove them hither and thither. Scurvy and starvation killed those who were already weak with privation, and on many days there was more than one burial at sea.

For two months they sailed north-west without taking in fresh food or water, and then they reached the Portuguese settlement of Santiago. Thirteen men struggled ashore to ask for food and two boat-loads of rice were sent, but the Portuguese looked askance at the *Vittoria*. A Spanish ship? What was she doing, sailing from the east with a cargo of spices? Had she, too, discovered a new way to India? The Portuguese were alarmed. They wanted the Spice Islands for themselves. Determined to obtain information from the Spaniards, they imprisoned the thirteen men who had come ashore. The others waited for them in vain, then fearing that they, too, would be captured if they went to rescue them, hauled in their anchor and set sail.

On Monday 8th September 1522 a lonely little ship anchored near the quay of Seville. Eighteen men, gaunt and thin, tanned by the sun and weak with sickness and starvation, stepped ashore. Barefoot and in their shirts, with heads uncovered and hands carrying lighted tapers, they walked slowly up the sandy path to the shrine of Santa Maria di l'Antiqua. The survivors of the first voyage round the world were giving thanks for their safe return.

PART III  
THE SEARCH FOR THE EAST BY WAY  
OF THE NORTH

I

HOW WILLOUGHBY AND CHANCELLOR SOUGHT FOR  
THE NORTH-EAST PASSAGE AND FOUND RUSSIA

**P**ICTURE to yourself a room, panelled, hung with tapestry and furnished with a solid table and low-backed chairs. Imagine a number of grave gentlemen in sumptuous velvet coats with full sleeves and ruffles at the wrists, slashed silk and velvet breeches, long trunk hose and flat velvet caps gaily plumed. They are seated round the table and talking to a man with a white beard and a serious, weather-beaten face. Watch how one turns to his neighbour and whispers something about ships and cargo, how another leans across the table and asks the old man a question while the rest remain respectfully silent—and you will have a picture of a merchants' meeting in the reign of Edward VI. The old man is Sebastian Cabot, well known as an explorer and a map-maker, and the younger ones are noblemen and wealthy merchants whose one thought is to serve their country.

There were many such meetings in England during Edward's reign, and the merchants, who met in council with Sebastian Cabot, were planning a great adventure by which they hoped to increase their country's fame and trade.

Ever since Vasco da Gama had discovered a new way to India for Portugal, and Magellan had found yet another way for Spain, these two countries had been growing rich, but they were unwilling to share their wealth, and tried to prevent other nations from sailing to the Indies, either round the south of Africa or round the south of America. The English merchants had been watching the trade of Portuguese and Spaniard increase by leaps and bounds and they were anxious that their own country should not be left behind. The Portuguese had sailed south-east and found the Indies, the Spaniards had sailed westward and had not only reached India but had discovered a new world on the way. There remained the north. Might it not be possible for Englishmen to sail past the northern mists and icebergs, and bearing to the east, find some passage which would lead them to sunny China? If they could discover this north-east passage they might surprise both Spaniard and Portuguese in the Spice Islands or even come to some strange, new country where English merchants would be welcomed.

As they sat round the table talking, they

decided to form a company of Merchant Adventurers. They would give public notice that under the direction of Sebastian Cabot, for whom all seafaring people had a great respect, they hoped to discover a new way to India or some unknown Northern land, and desired merchants and others to join their company and provide funds for the building of ships.

Their plan was so successful that they had very soon collected six thousand pounds, and the most diligent shipwrights in England set to work to build three new vessels for the adventure. They chose the strongest and best-seasoned planks, and because they had heard that in certain parts of the sea worms bored through the toughest oak, they covered the keels with thin sheets of lead. When the work was finished, three jaunty little sailing-boats were launched and the shipwrights were justly proud of their handiwork. There was the *Bona Esperanza*, a vessel of a hundred and twenty tons, complete with a pinnace and a boat, and worthy of Sir Hugh Willoughby who had been chosen as captain-general of the fleet. There was the ninety ton *Bona Confidentia* with her pinnace and boat and, lastly, the *Edward Bonaventure*, a fine little ship of a hundred and sixty tons for Richard Chancellor, the pilot-general.

The merchants expected great things of Chancellor, who had been highly recommended.

The nobleman, who was his guardian, had attended their meeting and spoken of the young man in glowing terms.

"You," he said, "know the man by report, I by experience; you by words, I by deeds; you by speech and company, I by the daily trial of his life have a full and perfect knowledge of him."

So Chancellor was given the responsible position of pilot, and everyone felt that he was probably more suited to it than any navigator in England except Cabot, who was now an old man of seventy and unable to brave the northern cold. But although Cabot was too old to undertake the journey, his mind was still vigorous, and it was really he who had inspired the enterprise. He had drawn up the instructions for the Merchant Adventurers and given much useful advice; and every officer, master, and mariner was confident that Chancellor would do his best to follow the old man's counsels.

Before sailing, Sir Hugh Willoughby, Richard Chancellor, and the masters of the ships were admitted to the Company of Merchant Adventurers and took the oaths, swearing to be faithful, true, and loyal subjects of King Edward VI, not to disclose any of the company's secrets nor to engage in private trade, and to do all that was possible for the safe conduct of the fleet and for the preservation of order on board.

On 10th May 1553 the ships, fully equipped with artillery, tools, and nautical instruments, and victualled for eighteen months, were towed down the Thames by rowing-boats. People ran along the banks, cheering, as the mariners in their sky-blue "liveries" pulled the oars. At Greenwich the captains and masters embarked, and as the King happened to be holding his Court there, ladies and gentlemen in their gay silks and velvets came down to the shore to see the vessels start. The members of the Privy Council looked out of the palace windows and the towers were crowded with courtiers. The ships fired a salute, the sailors cheered, and the people shouted till hill, valley, and water threw back the echoes. All down the river as far as Woolwich the ships sailed triumphantly and hopes were high, but at Harwich there was a long delay for not only did the wind fall, but many of the provisions on the *Edward Bonaventure* were found to be bad and some of the wine-casks were leaking, so that several weeks passed before the real start could be made.

One fine morning, however, they hoisted their sails and put to sea, sailing north-west along the east coast of England until they came to Suffolk, when they were obliged to change their course several times owing to adverse winds.

For many days they sailed until on 27th July, at seven o'clock in the morning, they sighted land



to the east and found themselves among the Lofoden islands off the coast of Norway. Here Sir Hugh Willoughby summoned Chancellor and the other captains and masters to the flagship, where he made known his wishes. He told them that the ships must remain together, if possible, but that if they should be separated by a storm they must try and reach a certain harbour on the north coast of Norway called the *Wardhouse*, and wait there until the remainder of the fleet joined them. The harbour to which he referred was really Vardsö, in the beautiful Varanger Fiord.

Scarcely had Sir Hugh Willoughby given his instructions and the officers returned to their ships when a great storm arose and the vessels were driven first in one direction and then in another. Sir Hugh shouted to Chancellor, "Keep near to me!" but Chancellor could neither hear nor obey, and within a few minutes the three ships had completely lost sight of one another.

The *Bona Esperanza* was buffeted hither and thither until midnight, when she lost her pinnace, to Sir Hugh's great distress. Then a thick fog enveloped her and she could see nothing for several hours. Four days passed and the little ship could make no headway, but when the storm had gradually subsided the mariners sighted another vessel which they seemed to recognize. They hailed her and to their great



joy found that she was the *Bona Confidentia*. Hoping that they would fall in with Chancellor and the *Edward Bonaventure*, they took a north-easterly course and made for the Wardhouse.

They sailed for some fifty leagues, then took soundings, and finding the water very deep, knew that they must be far from land and that their charts had deceived them, so once again they changed their course. For many weeks they sailed, continually taking soundings, and after a weary time they found that the water was becoming shallower and knew that they must be nearing land. They were glad, for the weather was bad and they were beginning to feel the cold and the *Bona Confidentia* was leaking badly. When, at last, they had sighted land and had come within two leagues of the shore, they anchored, launched a boat, and rowed towards the beach. The ground was very rocky and high, but they discovered a good harbour and returned with their information to Sir Hugh.

The captain-general ordered them to steer the ship into the harbour and to anchor there. He was distressed at not having found the Wardhouse, but as the weather was so discouraging and the autumn far advanced he decided to winter in this spot and set out again in the spring. The men looked very rueful when he announced his decision. The ground was already covered with snow and icicles hung from the trees, for

they had reached Lapland. They wondered how they could bear the cold if it grew worse, but they saw that it would soon be impossible to continue the journey as the icebergs farther north would make navigation too dangerous. So they obeyed orders and began to fell trees and raise wooden shelters and chop wood for fires. During the first few days the men were quite cheerful, as they were able to hunt and they felt sure that the skins of the bears and the white foxes would be very useful as rugs and as coats in this terrible climate. They were interested, too, in the seals and spent many an amusing hour watching the antics of these great creatures. But in a very short time their spirits began to flag. Sir Hugh had sent out parties of three and four, some to travel south-west, others to go due east, and yet others to make a three-days' journey to the south-east, to seek for the inhabitants of the country. But the groups returned, one after another, always with the same story. "There are white foxes and great deer, but the land is rocky and barren. There is ice and snow as far as the eye can see and never the sign of a house nor the trace of a human footprint."

Time passed and a gloom settled upon the little party. Sir Hugh tried to cheer them, but they were disconsolate. The days, so cold and bleak, were becoming shorter, and the men began to fear that the sun would soon disappear altogether.

They were not far wrong, for they were in those regions where there is complete darkness in the winter months, but sunshine, day and night, between June and November.

As the days grew darker the weather grew colder and the provisions did not seem to satisfy the men's hunger. They went to sleep in darkness and awoke in the same darkness, and as their eyes grew accustomed to it, they saw their own shadowy forms growing more gaunt and wild. Month followed month, and as the days passed and the darkness began slightly to lift, the men slowly lost strength. They had no provision for wintering in the Arctic, and they perished miserably. Some years later the ships and frozen bodies were found, and in Sir Hugh's cabin was a journal of the unfortunate voyage and his will, dated January 1554.

Meanwhile the *Edward Bonaventure* had had better luck. When Richard Chancellor found that the storm had separated him from Sir Hugh and that he had been blown many miles out of his course, he steered for the Wardhouse, thinking that he would find the other two ships awaiting him. Now, he had not been carried so far out of his way as Sir Hugh, so that when he reached the Wardhouse it was still summer and the sun was shining at midnight. He spent a week waiting for the fleet, then fearing that all had been destroyed in the storm, gathered his

own men together and addressed them. He found that they were not only willing, but eager to continue the voyage, and he was glad to know how much they trusted him.

So Chancellor set sail towards the unknown northern lands, and after a time put into that great bay which we call the White Sea. When he had lowered his anchor he espied, in the distance, a little fishing-boat and ordered his men to row towards her. When the fishermen saw the strangers they tried to escape, but Chancellor reached the shore as soon as they did and made such friendly signs that they came up to him and still trembling with fear, fell on the ground and began to kiss his feet. But Chancellor smiled at them, and raising them courteously, showed by gestures that he would do them no harm as he had only come to trade with them. The fisher-folk, who were very simple, soon made friends with him and they spread the report that men of a great nation, singularly gentle and courteous, had arrived, so that wherever Chancellor and his friends travelled they were received very kindly had given such food and lodging as they desired.

They soon found that the country to which they had come was called Russia, and that it was governed by the Grand Duke of Moscow, whose name was Ivan Vassilivitch. He was the first grand duke who, at his coronation, took the title of Tsar or Emperor.

When Chancellor had learned what he could of the country and had received the local noblemen on board his ship, he said that he carried letters from his own king and was anxious to make friends with the Muscovites and trade with them. The nobles, or *boyars* as they were called, were very gracious, but replied that they could do nothing without their ruler's permission except give hospitality to the strangers until they should hear from Ivan.

A messenger was despatched to the palace at Moscow and Chancellor eagerly awaited an answer. But when the days became weeks and the weeks were fast approaching months, he grew impatient and made up his mind to go to Moscow and, if possible, see Ivan for himself. The boyars tried to dissuade him, but they did not want to offend him in case he should set sail again and deprive their country of the English merchandise, so when they found that he was firm they provided him with guides, horses, and sledges, tucked a fur rug round his knees, and waved a farewell in the friendliest way.

It was intensely cold and sometimes the snowflakes fell so thickly that Chancellor could scarcely see the horses' heads. The snow stood twelve inches high on the branches of the fir-trees and tiny icicles hung where resin had oozed from the trunks. The ground was hard and when the weather was fine the horses drew the sledges at a

great pace and, despite the cold, Chancellor and the Englishmen whom he had chosen to accompany him enjoyed the journey.

When they had covered several hundred miles, resting by night in little cottages where the peasants slept, fully dressed, on their flat stoves, or in the larger wooden houses of the local boyars, they met Ivan's messenger. He had lost his way, otherwise he would have reached the shores of the White Sea before Chancellor had started.

He delivered his letters and Chancellor was delighted to learn that Ivan welcomed him to Moscow and had given orders that post-horses and sledges should be put at his disposal free of charge.

After journeying for many more days he arrived at the city and was much surprised to find that none of the streets were paved and that the houses were small with shingled roofs and the chinks between the walls stopped up with mosses and lichens.

His guides led him to the *Kremlin*, or citadel of Moscow, and he was astonished at the number of churches, which were domed, gilded, and coloured like fantastic dragons, green, gold, and scarlet. He was expecting to find a magnificent castle as the Grand Duke's dwelling-place, and was not very favourably impressed by the low square building with its narrow windows and benches fixed against all the walls.

The Englishmen remained for twelve days in the city before they were admitted to Ivan's presence, and when they finally saw him, his magnificent apparel and the ceremony with which he was treated dispelled their unpleasant impressions of the palace.

When the gates of the court were closed behind them, they found themselves in the presence of a hundred boyars dressed in cloth of gold down to their ankles and wearing peaked caps upon their heads. With courteous gestures the boyars led them into the audience chamber. On a royal throne, raised upon a daïs, sat Ivan. On his head was a golden diadem, richly chased, and in his hand he held a sceptre glowing with precious stones. On one side stood his chief secretary and on the other the "great Commander of Silence," both dressed in cloth of gold. All round the room sat the councillors, richly clothed. Their hair and beards were long, and they wore pointed caps on their heads. The higher the cap, the greater was their nobility.

Chancellor bowed and with a courteous gesture presented King Edward's letters to the Grand Duke, who asked a few questions, and after looking at the present which had been brought for him, dismissed the Englishmen with a gracious smile and an invitation to dine with him in two hours' time.

This dinner was a very magnificent affair



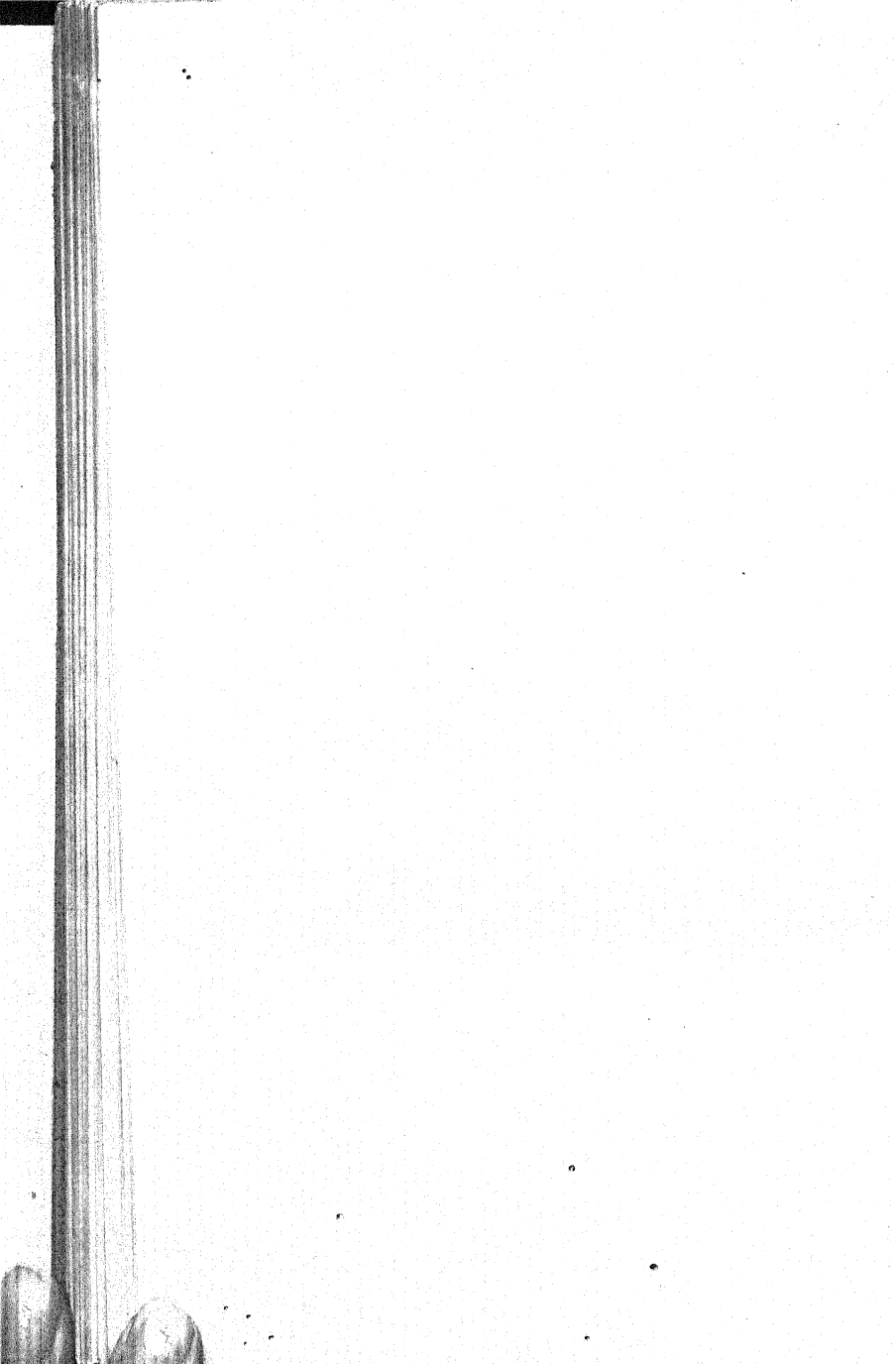
which began in the afternoon and ended far into the night. The Grand Duke sat at the end of the Golden Court, dressed in a silver robe, with a different crown upon his head. His guests sat opposite, and on each side of the hall were four tables, with three steps leading to each of them. They were covered with clean white tablecloths and plates and goblets of fine gold, and round them sat the boyars in fur-lined robes.

Chancellor noticed that no one began to eat until a very ancient custom had been observed. First Ivan made the sign of the cross on his own forehead, then taking up a piece of bread gave it to the chief guest in the room, while one of his stewards cried in a loud voice: "The Great Duke of Muscovy, Emperor of Russia, Ivan Vassilivitch, doth give thee (here the guest was named) bread." Then all the guests rose in a body and seated themselves, one by one, as they were named in turn. After this ceremony the Gentleman Usher of the Hall came in, followed by a hundred and forty serving-men, all clad in gold robes, carrying golden dishes. The usher made a deep bow, showed Ivan seven young swans upon seven golden platters, then took them to the carvers, who cut them up and distributed a portion to every guest. Each dish was treated in a similar manner, and during the course of the meal the serving-men appeared in three different changes of costume. When the dinner was over,





IVAN THE TERRIBLE  
(From an engraving in the British Museum)



candles were brought in and, before retiring, Ivan called upon each guest by name and Chancellor was amazed at his wonderful memory.

The Englishmen remained for several weeks in Russia and travelled to many of the different towns. They soon learned that the country was rich in wax, tallow, flax, hides, and furs, and they were very much pleased when Ivan sent them letters for Edward VI, giving the English full permission to trade, promising that they should come and go in security, and that if Sir Hugh Willoughby appeared after Chancellor had gone he, too, should be treated with equal civility.

The following spring, when the White Sea was free from ice, Chancellor rejoined his ship and sailed home to England.

He arrived in the summer of 1554, and although he had not discovered a north-east passage to India he had found a convenient port where English ships could bring merchandise to Russia, and his successful visit to Moscow opened trade between the two countries.

The next year he made another journey to Moscow, but on his return he was cast away off the coast of Aberdeenshire and perished with the greater part of his crew. After his death other people tried, without success, to find the north-east passage. Chief among these was a Dutchman, who discovered the islands of Spitzbergen

and Nova Zembla in the Arctic and gave his name, Barents, to the sea which lay between them.

But although these explorers had failed in their object, geographers and navigators still thought that the mysterious north must hide a secret passage to the east. In the next chapter we shall see how they made another attempt to solve the problem.

## II

### SEEKING FOR THE NORTH-WEST PASSAGE

**T**O-DAY many of us think of geography as something which is printed in books or drawn upon maps. But in the days of Queen Elizabeth geography was studied by means of travels and adventures which brought renown to the travellers and to the lands from which they came. It was a scattered record to which every seaman wanted to add something new; a romance, which cast its spell over young and old alike.

It cast its spell over young Martin Frobisher when he was little more than nineteen and sent him, bright-eyed and trembling with excitement, on a voyage to Guinea. For many years it carried him annually to the northern shores of Africa and other ports until he was a man, close upon middle age, well versed in the art of seamanship, well used to the command of men.

By and by he was brought to the notice of Sir Humphrey Gilbert, who was the Queen's favourite. Sir Humphrey was a seaman, too, whose mind was full of the romance and adventure of geography, and whose heart burned to add something new to the record. He understood the lure of the East which had charmed Marco Polo from

home, strengthened Vasco da Gama to battle against the winds and currents round the Cape of Good Hope, and drawn Columbus and Cabot across the Atlantic to a new world. Men were still seeking fresh roads to the East, for Portuguese and Spaniard were jealous guardians of the highways which they had found. The English adventurers, as we have seen, hoped to discover a passage by the north. But Willoughby and Chancellor had already sailed north-east and had not found one. "We will try the north-west," said Sir Humphrey, and talked of his plan to the Earl of Warwick, who was his friend, and to Martin Frobisher, in whose seamanship he had great confidence.

The result was that the Earl equipped two little boats, the *Gabriel* and the *Michael*, of twenty-five tons each, and a pinnacle of ten tons, to seek for a north-west passage to Cathay, as China was called in those days.

Frobisher was made admiral, and he felt very proud as he sailed down the Thames on 7th June 1576, and passing Greenwich saw Queen Elizabeth, in her gay quilted gown and stiff white ruff, looking out of a window and waving her hand. She was all smiles that day, for if her admiral found the north-west passage, England would soon be trading with China and the Indies, too, and the welfare of her country was near to Queen Elizabeth's heart.

Away went the little ships, out into the North Sea, past the Shetlands and the Faroe Islands, until they sighted Cape Farewell, the most southerly point of Greenland. Here disaster overtook them. They could not proceed because of the ice which lay along the coast, and the mists which hung around them never lifted for more than a few minutes at a time. Soon a terrible storm began to rage. The little pinnace and her crew were submerged and the *Gabriel's* topmast blew overboard. For many hours Frobisher and his men battled against the wind and the waves, and when, at last, the storm had lulled, they looked in vain for the *Michael*. She had deserted, and slipping home secretly to Bristol spread a report that the admiral had been cast away while, all the time, the plucky little *Gabriel* was well on her way to those northern lands which no Englishman had ever seen.

Sailing north-west the *Gabriel* reached a cape which Frobisher named Queen Elizabeth's Foreland, and still taking a northerly course she came, at last, to what the admiral thought was a passage with a continent on either side, so he sailed to the west, filled with hope and enthusiasm because he imagined that Asia lay on the right and America on the left. If this were true, he knew that he had come very near to finding the long-sought land of China. But what the admiral thought was a passage or strait was really

that big gulf which lies in Baffin Island and is called Frobisher Bay after its discoverer. Frobisher imagined that it would lead to the open sea. Eagerly he sailed along it for some sixty leagues, scanning the distance for some opening, but the passage seemed to be almost interminable. Eventually Frobisher decided to land and explore the coast.

He lowered his boat and rowed to shore, where he climbed a little hill and looked about him. In the distance he thought he saw a number of porpoises or seals, leaping in the water, but when he drew near he found that they were men, dressed in sealskins, who were rowing very rapidly with one oar in long skin-covered boats. Some of these strange boats had sails made of thin bladders sewn together with fish sinews. The natives who owned them were Esquimaux. Frobisher had much trouble in preventing them from stealing his own boat, but he treated them courteously, giving them little presents, and they soon made friends with him and brought him salmon and raw meat and exchanged their seal-skin coats and bearskins for the English sailors' clothes. The sailors were much amused at their tiny eyes and flat faces, their fur-lined buskins and skin leggings, and wanted to see how and where they lived, but Frobisher, fearing treachery, forbade them to go ashore. Nevertheless, five of the men disobeyed his orders and quietly



lowering the boat they rowed away secretly and were never seen again.

Frobisher was much distressed. It was impossible for him to rescue the men as they had taken the only boat, so he thought of a ruse whereby he might lure one of the Esquimaux on board. When he saw them coming down to the sea, he began to ring a little bell, making signs that they might have it if they would come and fetch it. They seemed to be afraid, so he flung the bell towards them, allowing it to fall short into the sea. When they looked disappointed he rang another bell very loudly, and one of them ventured close up to the ship and was about to take it when Frobisher dropped it into the sea and seized the man, hauling him by force over the side of the ship. One of the party, afterwards writing about this incident, said: "When he found himself in captivity, for very choler and disdain he bit his tongue in twain within his mouth: notwithstanding he died not thereof but lived until he came in England, and then he died of cold which he had taken at sea."

Now that he had taken a captive to prove how far he had travelled in unknown parts, Frobisher decided to make for home, so he sailed away, arriving in Harwich early in October. Everyone was naturally very much astonished as the *Michael* had reported that he was drowned. People could scarcely believe their eyes when

they saw him alive and well and full of enthusiasm. He brought back a hopeful message regarding the North-West Passage and something else, which caused considerable excitement. One of his sailors had found a piece of black pyrites, which was very abundant in *Meta Incognita*, as the new land was named. The London goldsmiths, hearing about this stone, examined it and assured Frobisher that it contained gold. Immediately every merchant and seaman was filled with the greatest possible excitement. Englishmen had sailed to the cold, northern regions and found gold. It was marvellous. If England could find great stores of wealth in the north, she would soon be as rich as her Spanish rivals, whose galleons were already carrying golden bars and sparkling gems across the sea from South America. Martin Frobisher must go forth again, right soon, and find more gold.

And now the gold seemed even more important than the North-West Passage. Queen Elizabeth was delighted. She equipped a tall and beautiful ship called the *Aid*. It was a vessel of two hundred tons, the largest in Frobisher's fleet, for he took, once again, the *Gabriel* and the *Michael*, which were but little, unimportant ships in comparison.

The fleet was ready to start early in May 1577, and Frobisher followed the same course as before and once again encountered a terrible

storm off the coast of Greenland, during which the *Michael* was very nearly wrecked, and the three ships were separated until they reached the northern entrance of Frobisher Bay.

Now this time Frobisher had brought with him a number of "goldfiners" to examine the ore which he was seeking, miners to dig for it, and many soldiers to protect his men from the Esquimaux and to try to rescue those five mariners who had been captured on the first voyage. With great difficulty because of the ice, he and forty others landed upon a small island in the bay. They walked for about two miles until they came to the top of a hill where they set up a cross on a cairn. Then one of the sailors sounded a trumpet, the ensign-bearer planted the English flag beside the cairn, and all knelt to pray as Frobisher named the place Mount Warwick, after the Earl who had done so much to promote the expedition.

At first nothing happened, but as they were making their way back to the boats a number of Esquimaux appeared on the mount, waving a flag and uttering loud, moaning cries. Frobisher had his trumpets blown, whereupon the Esquimaux began to skip up and down and laugh with delight. Frobisher sent some pins, bells, and laces to them, but they would not approach the messengers, who left the things on the ground and returned. When the Esquimaux saw this,

they ran down the hill, picked up the presents and put a few skins and bow-cases in their place, and retired quickly. After a time they made friends with the English, and Frobisher was anxious to keep one of them as an interpreter. Unfortunately, he tried to do this by force with the result that he was wounded by their arrows and the captured Esquimaux badly bruised.

After this little adventure, the English began to explore the islands and the mainland, naming some of the bays after their friends, and running into great danger among the ice-floes. Finding a quantity of ore on one of the islands, Frobisher set his miners to work while he and his officers examined the country and looked high and low for those five men who had disappeared the year before. In one place they found some deserted huts. They were not unlike the lairs of wild beasts, for they were partly underground and surrounded by gutters to catch the water from the hills. The top part, from the ground upwards, was made of whale-bones bent one over the other and covered with sealskin. In one of these huts, among some old skins and the bones of dead dogs, lay an English doublet, a belt, and three shoes. The man who found it cried out and the others came running up.

"Sir, sir," they called to Frobisher, "our people have been here."

Frobisher looked into the hut, then called for

the captured Esquimaux, asking him by signs whether the five lost Englishmen had been there and what had happened to them. The Esquimaux nodded and smiled, and when the Englishmen asked him if their friends had been slain and eaten he shook his head. Then Frobisher put a few gifts in the hut and a pen, some paper, and ink, hoping that the poor captives might be allowed to write a note, and departed to his ship intending to entrap the Esquimaux and rescue his men.

The next day he watched the shore carefully, and when a number of Esquimaux appeared he tried to surround them, discharging his guns so as to frighten them. But the Esquimaux were brave. They turned upon the English, letting fly their arrows, and when their own weapons failed they even plucked the English arrows from their bodies and shot them at their enemies. Some of them, finding that they were mortally wounded, flung themselves headlong from the cliffs. Six were killed and the others fled, leaving two women behind. The English sailors seized one of them, but she was so old and ugly that they were afraid of her.

"Have a care," whispered one, crossing himself, "for I fear this is the devil."

"Aye, aye," muttered another, "but let us prove it," and in spite of the old woman's kicks he pulled off her sealskin boots to see whether

she had a cloven hoof. Her feet appeared to be normal, but her grimaces were so appalling that the men were only too glad to let her go.

Meanwhile another sailor had shot at the younger woman, thinking she was a man. The arrow had passed through her hair and grazed her baby's arm. She screamed with terror and the ship's surgeon ran up to her with salves and plasters for the child's arm, but she pulled them off and licked the wound until it was healed.

Frobisher had now three prisoners, the man, the woman, and the child, and he promised to restore them to their friends as soon as the five Englishmen were given up. Then he made signs, showing that he would like a letter delivered, and this is what he wrote:

"In the name of God in whom we all believe who (I trust) hath preserved your bodies and souls amongst these infidels, I commend me unto you. I will be glad to seek by all means ye can devise for your deliverance, either with force or with any commodities within my ships, which I will not spare for your sakes, or anything else I can do for you. I have aboard of theirs a man, a woman, and a child, which I am contented to deliver for you, but the man which I carried away from hence the last year, is dead in England. Moreover, you may declare unto them, that if they deliver you not; I will not leave a man alive

in their country. And thus, if one of you can come to speak with me, they shall have either the man, woman, or child in pawn for you. And thus unto God, whom I trust you do serve, in haste I leave you, and to Him we will daily pray for you. This Tuesday morning the Seventh of August. Anno 1557.

"Yours to the uttermost of my power,  
"MARTIN FROBISHER."<sup>1</sup>

But it was all of no avail. They could get no tidings of the missing men, and as time was rapidly passing Frobisher turned his attention to the mining and did not even think of seeking for the North-West Passage.

When they had stored two hundred tons of the sparkling mineral in their holds, they set sail once again and arrived at Milford Haven. Delighted that so much wealth had been found, the Queen commanded that some of the ore should be sent to Bristol Castle and some to the Tower of London. Four strong locks were placed upon the doors and great was the disappointment when the ore was found to be very poor in quality.

The London merchants, however, were con-

<sup>1</sup> The letters of Frobisher and Davis and the extracts from the journals are taken from *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation*, by Richard Hakluyt, vol. v (Everyman edition).

vinced that great riches were hidden away in these mysterious northern lands, and so they begged Frobisher to undertake a third voyage the following year. The Queen made him handsome promises and gave him a beautiful gold chain, and the merchants, sure of his success, sent him on his voyage with a fleet of fifteen vessels.

But Frobisher was unlucky. He did not find the North-West Passage. He only succeeded in getting lost in an unknown strait, in discovering a little more of Frobisher Bay, and in loading his ship with worthless mineral, for the ore which had raised the merchants' hopes contained no gold.

Feeling now began to turn against Frobisher. He was not sent upon another expedition, and so he passes away from our list of explorers. Yet the romance of geography had not called to him in vain, for he had added another item to the record and thus immortalized his name.

Meanwhile another young man had been listening to the call of the sea. His name was John Davis. All his life he had been on intimate terms with the Raleighs and the Gilberts, who were great sea-faring families, and from his early boyhood he made long voyages. Seven years after Frobisher's third attempt to find the North-West Passage had been hampered by the quest for gold, Davis set out with two little vessels called the *Moonshine* and the *Sunshine*.



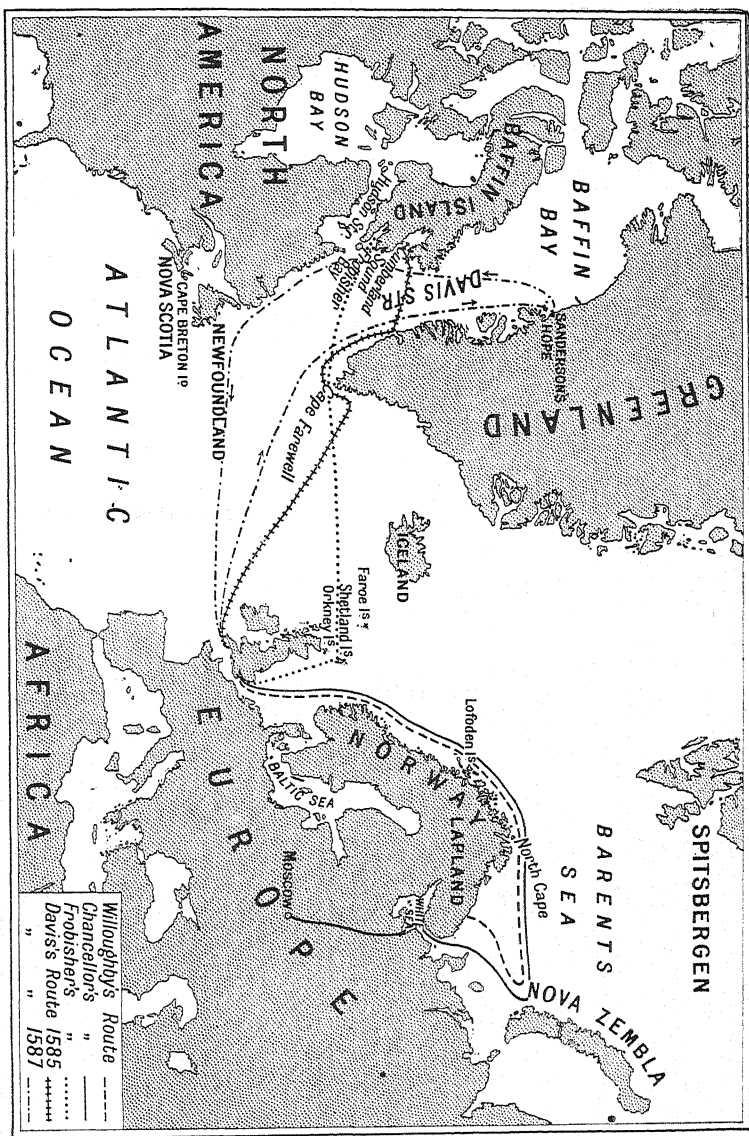
## THE SEARCH FOR THE EAST 183

By 20th July 1585 he had sighted the mountains of Greenland, which looked so bleak and bare that he named it the Land of Desolation. Sailing north along the western coast he found himself among green and pleasant islands, where he anchored in a little bay which he called Gilbert's Sound, after Sir Humphrey and his own little son. Among these islands lived the Greenlanders. In his diary Davis described his first meeting with them:

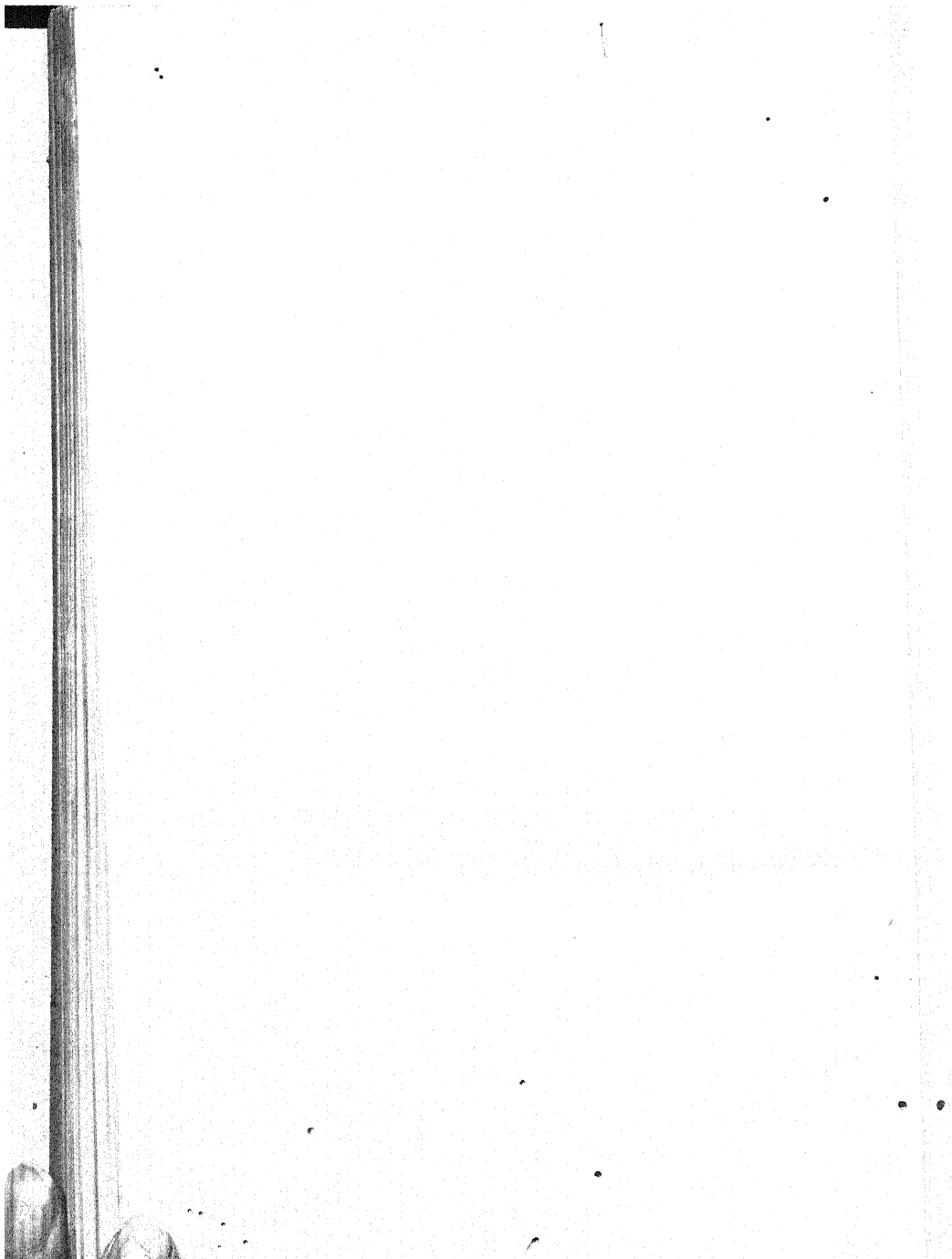
"Upon this island we did perceive that there had been people: for we found a small shoe and pieces of leather sowed with sinews, and a piece of fur and wool like to beaver. Then we went upon another island on the other side of our ships: and the Captain, the Master and I, being got to the top of an high rock, the people of the country having espied us made a lamentable noise, as we thought, with great outcries and screechings; we hearing them thought it had been the howling of wolves. At last I hallowed again, and they likewise cried. Then we perceiving where they stood, some on the shore, and one rowing in a canoe about a small island fast by them, we made a great noise. . . . Whereupon M. Bruton and the Master of his ship, with others of their company made great haste towards us, and brought our musicians with them from our ship, purposing by force to rescue us, if need should require, or with courtesy to allure the

people. When they came unto us we caused our Musicians to play, ourselves dancing and making many signs of friendship. At length there came ten canoes from the other islands, and two of them came so near the shore where we were that they talked with us. . . . Their pronunciation was very hollow through the throat, and their speech such as we could not understand; only we allured them by friendly embracings and signs of courtesy. At length one of them pointing up to the sun with his hand, would presently strike his breast so hard that we might hear the blow. This he did many times before he would anyway trust us. Then John Ellis, the Master of the Moonshine, was appointed to use his best policy to gain their friendship; who struck his breast and pointed to the sun after their order; which when he had divers times done, they began to trust him, and one of them came on shore, to whom we threw our caps, stockings, and gloves, and such other things as then we had about us, playing without music, and making signs of joy and dancing. . . . We came to the waterside where they were: and after we had sworn by the sun after their fashion, they did trust us. So I shook hands with one of them, and he kissed my hand and we were very familiar with them."

The Greenlanders grew to love Davis and his company and sold them many buskins, furs, and feathers. They described a great open sea to the



MAP SHOWING THE ROUTES OF WILLOUGHBY, CHANCELLOR, FROBISHER, AND DAVIS



north-west and in seeking for it Davis entered that wide channel which has since been called Davis Strait after him. He crossed the Arctic circle and anchored under a great promontory which he called Mount Raleigh. Here he sought, high and low, for human inhabitants, but he found nothing but four white bears. Coasting south for several days, this brave little party of Englishmen came upon an ice-free bay, which they thought was a strait on account of its length. It was really Cumberland Sound, which lies north of Frobisher Bay in Baffin Land.

And now, as the season was far advanced, the cold intense, and the very air a mass of whirling flakes, Davis decided to return and try again another year. Cumberland Sound seemed a hopeful spot, and they were almost certain that if they had sufficient time to explore, they would find that it was the North-West Passage.

The following year Davis set out again. This time he had a fleet of four ships, the *Moonshine* and the *Sunshine*, the *Mermaid*, which was the largest of all (sixty tons), and a little pinnace called the *Northern Star*.

No sooner had the ships reached Gilbert Sound than the friendly Greenlanders, with cries of joy, came paddling in their canoes towards the rowing boats which Davis had lowered.

"Aie, aie," they cried, grunting with satisfaction and seizing the Englishmen's oars. They

embraced Davis heartily and brought him beautiful furs as a present, and they bitterly grieved when they found that he had only come for a very short time. But Davis knew that he must not delay, and in spite of their lamentations he pushed on.

Unfortunately, through cold and lack of fresh food his men fell ill. Many of them grew faint-hearted when they saw the huge floating icebergs and felt the pain of their frostbitten ears and fingers. They began to complain and Davis, who knew that he could not make headway with a mutinous crew, sent the sick and the frightened home, while he himself, with a few staunch friends, braved the bitter winds and dangerous ice-floes and pushed on farther north.

He crossed his own strait once again, sailed south, and explored the land round Cumberland Sound. Then, coasting farther south, examined that very shore of Labrador which Cabot had passed eighty-nine years earlier. But the weather was now becoming worse, so Davis, making up his mind to return another year, sailed back to England with a cargo of codfish and sealskins.

The merchants were disappointed. Twice he had sought the North-West Passage and had not found it. They had expected him to bring back news of China and a hold full of precious jewels and silks. They did not want codfish, for they could now get all the cod which they needed

from Newfoundland, and so poor Davis was not given a very warm welcome. Nevertheless, there was one merchant who believed in him and thought that he would find the passage. This was a certain Sanderson. He helped Davis to equip ships for a third expedition, and the year 1587 found the dauntless explorer once again sailing north. Leaving two of his ships to fish, he went with a small crew in a little boat called the *Helen*, and, crossing the Arctic circle yet again, he came to the most northerly point which had ever been reached. This he called "Sanderson's Hope," and, sailing to the north, found himself in a blue sea, free from ice, and very wide and beautiful. Hopeful and eager he tried to push on, but the wind began to blow, and although the little ship sailed on for forty leagues without sight of land, she was obliged to turn back and coast southwards, for a great bank of ice stood in her way, and the wind prevented her from passing it. So naming seas, headlands, and bays, and trading with the Esquimaux on the coast, Davis made his perilous journey homewards.

Exhausted, he sat in his cabin and wrote to the man who had believed in him :

" Good Mr. Sanderson, with God's great mercy I have made my safe return in health, with all my company and have sailed three score

leagues further than my determination at my departure. I have been in 73 degrees, finding the sea all open, and forty leagues between land and land. The passage is most probable, the execution easy, as at my coming you shall fully know.

"Yesterday the 15 of September I landed all weary; therefore I pray you pardon my shortness.

"Sandridge this 16 of September anno 1587.

"Your equal as mine own, which by trial you shall best know,

"JOHN DAVIS."

The North-West Passage was not found, but Davis had explored over seven hundred and thirty miles of coast from Cape Farewell to Sanderson's Hope. He was the father of Arctic exploration, and he added a glamour to the romance of geography, which inspired others to follow in his footsteps.

"And Davis three times forth for the North-  
West made  
And striving by that course t'enrich the English  
trade,  
And as he well deserved to his eternal fame,  
There by a mighty sea immortalized his name."

Frobisher and Davis were not the only seamen in this intrepid age of discovery to seek for the North-West Passage. A few years later Henry



Hudson, who had twice tried to find the North-East Passage, was engaged by the Dutch to seek a road to the East. He sailed in a little barque called the *Half Moon*, with his young son Jack and a crew of Dutch and English sailors. He did not find China, but he discovered that wonderful river which bears his name.

In 1610 he too sought the North-West Passage and, after struggling through biting winds and dangerous icebergs, sailed into the strait named after him. He thought that, at last, he had discovered the passage, but he could not find an outlet. Before very long he was land-bound and winter-bound and was forced to haul in his ship and go into winter quarters. Month after month he watched the snow falling and saw his men growing weaker every day. From November until May he stayed, half starving and miserably cold, on land, and then the ice began to melt.

"Come, men," said he, "we will start again, for the passage is near at hand."

But the men refused. With curses and threats they urged him to make for home, and in despair Hudson obeyed. Many of the crew were sick and the others mutinous and hungry. Their eyes followed Hudson's movements with suspicion and they muttered angrily whenever he gave them an order. They shivered as they looked at the snow-covered coast and the blue

ice and cursed the bright sun which never warmed their starved and miserable bodies. "We shall die without Christian burial," they whispered, and shook their skinny fists at Hudson's back.

The icebergs seemed to be drifting towards them and they watched them nervously. Sometimes the very silence of these deserted regions frightened them. Sometimes the sudden cracking of the ice caused them to clutch one another in terror and call wildly upon God to save them.

There came a morning when they went about their duties with grim, set faces. Their eyes were ominously calm, and they watched Hudson and poor little hungry Jack as cats watch mice. Hudson gave an order quietly. Before he could turn he was seized and pinioned.

"What are you about?" he cried to the ruffians who had bound him. "Release me!"

"Get into the boat," shouted the mutineers, thrusting a tin of meal into his hand and pushing him into a little shallop. "Get you in too," they cried, and flung Jack after his father. Then forcing all the sick to follow, they pushed off the boat, leaving Hudson adrift in his own strait.

The tiny barque with its miserable freight was never seen again, but Hudson had added yet another name to that scattered record of geography.

The passage by the north had not been found,

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but the clouds which had hidden north, south east, and west were slowly rolling away and the courageous explorers of this great age have won our eternal gratitude for revealing so much of this wonderful world, which is our heritage.



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